The Women of Egypt

Elizabeth Cooper

THE WOMEN OF EGYPT

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2015

https://archive.org/details/womenofegypt00coop

AN EGYPTIAN VILLAGE WOMAN FILLING HER JAR FROM THE NILE.

[*Frontispiece*

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
DEC 8 1914
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE WOMEN OF EGYPT

BY
ELIZABETH COOPER
AUTHOR OF
"MY LADY OF THE CHINESE COURTYARD"
"THE SOUL TRADERS," "SAYONARA"
ETC.

WITH FIFTY-ONE ILLUSTRATIONS

New York
FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY
PUBLISHERS
1914

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

TO

MALAK EL BASSEL

THROUGH WHOSE FRIENDSHIP AND GUIDANCE

I WAS ENABLED TO SEE THE WOMAN

OF EGYPT FROM BEHIND THE

MOUSHRABEAH

PREFACE

BEFORE visiting the Orient I endeavoured to learn from books something in relation to the woman of Egypt. I found much writing relative to ancient Egypt, its history and its temples, also many books dealing with the political aspects of the present-day country of the Nile. In all these treatises, however, I looked vainly for information concerning the woman. Through my friendship with Egyptian women I was permitted to visit in the homes and learn the customs and life, to a degree at least, of the women of various classes, both Egyptian and Bedouin. I visited the girls' schools and saw young Egypt at study. I visited the Missions, the hospitals, learning there the crying need of the woman for a larger knowledge of sanitary laws. Much was gained from those who have looked upon the woman of Egypt from the point of view of her moral and religious development. Through my housekeeping experi-

ences in Cairo I discovered conditions relative to the working woman and the labouring class which can only be observed by a householder.

Although I am well aware that the woman of Egypt, lodged in her traditions and conservatism, is not readily revealed, especially to an outsider, it is my hope that these pages may afford a glimpse into the modern life and problems confronting her in the present rapid and revolutionary changes which Egypt is now experiencing in common with the entire Eastern world.

E. C.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

PAGE

EGYPT'S HOPE AND EGYPT'S HANDICAP . 21

"As go the women of Egypt, so goes Egypt"—Isolated womanhood—Changing conditions.

CHAPTER II

COSMOPOLITAN CAIRO 31

Theatrical effects for the tourist—Everyday life in the streets—The traveller's paradise—The bazaars—"Come to Prayer"—Cairo's mosques—Where the men of Egypt meet: the cafés—Out-of-door restaurants—Where West meets East.

CHAPTER III

LIFE ALONG THE NILE 73

Palm-thatched houses and desert sands—Old wives' fables—How rural women live—"Turn, O Sakkia"

CHAPTER IV

PAGE

KEEPING HOUSE IN CAIRO 98

House-hunting—The eternal servant question—Where Arab shrewdness reigns—The market-place—Cairo's minarets from our window.

CHAPTER V

FEMININE CHARACTERISTICS 126

The Egyptian lady—The woman of the middle class—The woman who works—The Fellaha—The woman of the desert.

CHAPTER VI

EGYPTIAN WOMEN AT SCHOOL 161

A vital awakening—Household economy—Government schools—Teaching a new vocation—Education unlocking harem doors.

CHAPTER VII

THE EGYPTIAN HAREM 180

Seclusion, its origin and power—Influence of the Koran—Social life behind closed doors—An afternoon visit to feminine Egypt—Woman the preserver of the harem.

CHAPTER VIII

PAGE

MARRIAGE 200

No spinsters in Egypt—The Egyptian girl's betrothal—Exchange of presents—Marriage festivities—Cupid's tragedy.

CHAPTER IX

DIVORCE AND POLYGAMY 214

Egypt's triple divorce—The destruction of community interest—Effect upon the children—Economics and polygamy—The voice and example of the Arabian Prophet.

CHAPTER X

AMUSEMENTS OF THE EGYPTIAN WOMEN . 224

A specialist in the household—When the West drinks tea, the East drinks coffee—Gossip, dress, and jewellery—A dinner-party in No Man's Land—Court-yard shopping—The Egyptian an anti-suffragette.

CHAPTER XI

HOSPITALITY 242

"Every stranger an invited guest"—In a modern Bedouin tent—The heritage of the Nomad—Tribal customs—Who would ride a camel?—The simple virtues of a primitive people.

CHAPTER XII

PAGE

THE EGYPTIAN WOMAN AND HER CHILDREN . 285

"Sons, sons, give me sons!"—Birthday feasts—The laws of the Prophet—A survival of the fittest—The children of the soil.

CHAPTER XIII

SUPERSTITION 299

Fairies and "Ginns"—Guardian angels—Egyptian woman and her "charms"—The "Evil Eye"—The Gods of the Nile—Dreams.

CHAPTER XIV

ISLAM RELIGION AND THE EGYPTIAN WOMAN. 315

Mohammed the Prophet—Koranic laws for women—Islam, a man's religion—Her religious point of view

CHAPTER XV

THE COPTIC RELIGION 337

"What is a Copt?"—The original Egyptians—The disadvantages of a minority faith.

CHAPTER XVI

PAGE

EGYPT AND THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONS . . 348

Missionary difficulties—Missionary advances—Missionary methods—The Missionary the pioneer in education, hospitals, and emancipation of women.

CHAPTER XVII

THE EGYPTIAN QUESTION AND THE EGYPTIAN WOMAN 364

The New Freedom—Influence of the new generation—A time of transition—Love and the right to choose her mate.

INDEX 377

ILLUSTRATIONS

AN EGYPTIAN VILLAGE WOMAN FILLING HER JAR FROM THE NILE . . . . *Frontispiece*

PAGE

AN EGYPTIAN PEASANT WOMAN AND HER CHILDREN 25

STREET MERCHANTS: CAIRO SHERBET—A BLACK MAN WITH BEADS AND FLY SWITCHES . . 35

WOMEN GOING TO PAY A VISIT 41

A WATER-CARRIER: "SWEET WATER FOR SALE" 45

THE PUBLIC LETTER-WRITERS, CAIRO . . . 49

STREET MERCHANTS: FRESH BREAD—EVERYTHING FOR THE KITCHEN 53

LOADING ONIONS ON THE BANK OF THE NILE . 61

THE GREAT SPHINX AND THE PYRAMIDS . . 69

A DAHABIYEH ON THE NILE 75

BREAD IN ASSIUT: PUT IN THE SUNNY STREET TO RISE 79

PIGEON-HOUSES IN A VILLAGE 83

DRAWING WATER 91

ILLUSTRATIONS

AN EGYPTIAN VILLAGE WOMAN FILLING HER JAR FROM THE NILE . . . . *Frontispiece*

PAGE

AN EGYPTIAN PEASANT WOMAN AND HER CHILDREN 25

STREET MERCHANTS: CAIRO SHERBET—A BLACK MAN WITH BEADS AND FLY SWITCHES . . 35

WOMEN GOING TO PAY A VISIT 41

A WATER-CARRIER: "SWEET WATER FOR SALE" 45

THE PUBLIC LETTER-WRITERS, CAIRO . . . 49

STREET MERCHANTS: FRESH BREAD—EVERYTHING FOR THE KITCHEN 53

LOADING ONIONS ON THE BANK OF THE NILE . 61

THE GREAT SPHINX AND THE PYRAMIDS . . 69

A DAHABIYEH ON THE NILE 75

BREAD IN ASSIUT: PUT IN THE SUNNY STREET TO RISE 79

PIGEON-HOUSES IN A VILLAGE 83

DRAWING WATER 91

PAGE

LICENSED PORTER IN THE MARKET, CAIRO . . 103

SPINACH FOR SALE 107

AN ORANGE-WOMAN 111

LITTLE GIRLS WHO BEG TO CARRY HOME YOUR PURCHASES 115

ALFALFA FRESH FROM THE FIELDS . . . 119

THE SEWING LADY 123

A LAUNDRY WOMAN CARRYING CLOTHES ON HER HEAD 127

EGYPTIAN LADY IN STREET DRESS . . . 131

A CAIRO LADY IN STREET DRESS . . . 135

A WOMAN OF THE LABOURING CLASSES . . 139

FEAST DRESS OF THE LOWER-CLASS EGYPTIAN WOMAN 143

AN EGYPTIAN WOMAN CARRYING WATER . . 147

WATER-CARRIERS: ONE WITH A NATIVE JAR, AND ONE WITH A STANDARD OIL TIN . . . 151

A WOMAN OF THE DESERT 155

AN EGYPTIAN GIRL CARRYING WATER. . . 159

GIRLS' COLLEGE, CAIRO 163

INTERIOR OF A MOSQUE, EL AZHAR (UNIVERSITY), CAIRO 171

PAGE

A SHEIKH 175

A NATIVE WOMAN SELLING FRUIT . . . 181

AN ARAB FAMILY AT DINNER 190

A STREET IN CAIRO, WITH MOUSHRABEAHS IN FRONT OF THE UPPER WINDOWS . . . 203

CAIRO: HOUSES WITH MOUSHRABEAHS (LATTICES BEFORE THE WOMEN'S QUARTERS) . . 227

BOATS ON THE NILE 237

A GUARD AT THE BEDOUIN CAMP . . . 243

THE BEDOUIN CHIEF 243

A BEDOUIN TENT 249

HOLDING A BEDOUIN BABY 261

EN ROUTE TO THE DESERT 265

MAKING FRIENDS WITH A CAMEL . . . 271

CARRYING FAGGOTS 277

YOUNG EGYPT 287

A YOUNG EGYPTIAN GIRL 291

CHILDREN FROM A VILLAGE SCHOOL . . . 295

THE THREE ATTITUDES OF PRAYER . . . 317

GRADUATING CLASS, CAIRO 357

AN EVENING VIEW OF THE PYRAMIDS . . 373

THE WOMEN OF EGYPT

CHAPTER I

EGYPT'S HOPE AND EGYPT'S HANDICAP

AS go the women of Egypt, so goes Egypt. In the ancient land of the Nile, as in the newest dependency of the twentieth century, Longfellow's words are true:

> As unto the bow the cord is
> So unto man is woman.
> Though she bends him, she obeys him,
> Though she leads him, yet she follows;
> Useless each without the other.

The woman of Egypt is the hope of Egypt, because the country depends upon the home, and the home is woman's domain.

If woman is the conservator of the home in the West, guarding it strictly from innovation and change because it represents to her permanence,

and is veritably her throne, the woman of Egypt is even more completely synonymous with her home-life, since it is her sole kingdom, the only world she knows or sees. Not infrequently she passes her life in a single humble dwelling, with not so much as a visit to a relative or a friend, while her children bear the stamp of her mind and heart as exactly as the centuries-old hieroglyphics upon the monuments and tombs of Egyptian kings reflect the life of the dweller in the Nile Valley to-day.

What the woman of Egypt is in the home, the man of Egypt will be in the field, in the shop, and in the office, while the youth of Egypt will carry the influences of the household into every phase of the changing progress of the New Egypt. There is indeed no "Egyptian Question" that does not include the consideration of the Egyptian woman; there are no "Capitulations," involving the sixteen world Powers in the political guidance of this country, more intricate than is the life of woman, woven as it is into custom, tradition, and domesticity; she is the first architect of the Egyptian's fate, building her ideas and habits into the aims and ambitions of her sons and daughters; she is the key to Modern Egypt.

The Westerner's attention is early attracted, in Alexandria and Cairo especially, to the womanless mosques, the womanless cafés, and the womanless public assemblies. The first question naturally arising is, "Where are the women?"

One finds it incredible, even when told by those who know, that the women of humble life are often domestic prisoners throughout the day in the rude huts of the fellaheen or tradesmen, or that the chief recreation of the lady is to sit closely screened behind the moushrabeah, while her lord and master goes forth to mix with men and affairs in a civilization which is slowly but surely flowing down into the old land of Saladin from the European capitals.

The slow progress of women toward modern ideas is not difficult to appreciate when one discovers that they are frequently the companions of beasts and primeval conditions for the greater part of their days, or shut up to shallow thought, gossip, and purely material ideals, conversing only with women as ignorant as they are themselves, their mental and moral growth and attractiveness, with their physical charms, fading for want of light, free air, and exercise.

The usual absence of sanitary laws and medical

attention (these women are never allowed a man physician except in extreme cases) add to the handicap under which the women of this backward country are living.

Is it any wonder that the womanhood of Egypt has been compared to the poisonous roots of the upas-tree which, by its very contagion, dwarfs and blights the whole growth and structure of the national body? She has brought to her sons and husbands through decades, not hope, not companionship, not equality or religion, as we are accustomed to think of the women of the West contributing, but rather a benighted conception of home-life, from the point of view of Western ideas, and this condition has readily become the atmosphere in which is easily bred unrest, intrigue, and a low ideal of physical relationships.

It must not be thought, however, that the woman of Egypt has had no place in the history of a country with a great ancient civilization. Early records show the wives of kings honoured by their consorts and respected by the people. A thousand years before Abraham, Egyptian law secured to women the right of succession to the throne, and queen after queen swayed the Empire of Egypt, when Egypt swayed the Empires of the world. One of

AN EGYPTIAN PEASANT WOMAN AND HER CHILDREN.

the oldest sculptures yet recovered from the ruins of Egypt represents a prince and princess, husband and wife, seated side by side. The tallest monolith in the world was the work of Queen Hatshepsut. In the old tombs and temples are pictures of queens riding in triumphant processions, and Amenophis is represented riding in a chariot followed by the chariots containing his seven daughters. One of the wives of Solomon was the daughter of a Pharaoh; special honour was accorded her, a magnificent palace being erected for her, and she was given the privilege of worshipping her own gods, although this was contrary to the laws of Israel.

There is indication that something of this old-time prestige and dignity may again be the boon of the Egyptian woman, and that she will prove in the modern day her ability to serve her husband and her country as a torch-bearer and real enlightener. Already the woman of Egypt has begun her escape; she has not only looked out, but has actually begun to come out from her prison walls. During the past ten years especially, the process of her renaissance has been comparatively rapid. She has discovered the value and possibility of education; the English Government has brought to her schools for the girl children of the

country districts where young women are learning freedom and efficiency with considerable knowledge of the outside world. From the *kuttabs*, the primary and secondary schools, girls are carrying home the leaven which is to make Egypt veritably a new heaven and a new earth.

These changes in the new day of education and mental training are not without their effect upon character. The Government schools are setting apart definite hours for the teaching of the sacred books of Islam, while in the missionary schools, which are being largely attended by the young women of both Coptic and Moslem homes, particular attention is given each day to moral and religious instruction.

The women of Egypt, furthermore, are being lifted upon the tide of the new economic progress. Egyptian husbands and sons, for the first time in centuries, are beginning to prosper materially, and dare to proclaim their prosperity by the signs that are attendant upon modern civilization, such as more comfortable homes, richer clothing, horses, carriages, and motors, amongst the more wealthy classes. No longer do the fellaheen bury their small savings lest some ruthless Pasha or unscrupulous tribute-gatherer should include them in

his rapacious and illegitimate taxation schemes. Indeed, the word *feloos* (money) is one of the sovereign words in Egypt to-day, and the woman of Egypt is giving evidence of its influence quite as much as are the men of her family.

Evidences in line with this economic advance are seen in the growing desire of women to find out how their sisters live in other parts of the world. In the bazaars of Cairo, which, in the days of Ismail Pasha, rarely saw a woman customer, it is not uncommon to see clusters of veiled women, in their new independence of choosing for themselves their clothing and ornaments, bargaining, chattering, admiring, and purchasing jewellery and finery, which formerly was purchased for them by their husbands. In the large cities, like Cairo and Alexandria, one sees occasionally a screened box in the theatre which encloses the wives and daughters of Beys and Pashas escaped from the narrowing confines of four walls, and beginning to share consciously as well as unconsciously in the life of their husbands' world.

Yet the modern Egyptian woman does not want to be a Westerner. She wishes still to keep her customs, endeared to her by tradition, habit, and religion. She does not care to unveil her face nor

exchange the harborah for a hat ; she wishes to see the world and learn its ways, but she always remembers that she is an Oriental and a follower of El Islam, and for many years yet this world must come to *her* ; she will not go to the world. It will rather be brought to her by the chatter of her daughter as she comes from the new schools, and by her husband and sons who will unwittingly give her glimpses into the life that has been shut away from her, as she thinks in kindness, to guard her from the care and worries that wait outside her doorway.

In observing the position of women in the East as girl, wife, and mother, we see much that is unpleasant in contrast with the corresponding position of women in our own portion of the world. But the Egyptian woman is not unhappy, nor does she consider herself a prisoner.

The lark beats out its life against the bars, while the canary is happy in its cage, because the cage is home.

CHAPTER II

COSMOPOLITAN CAIRO

I VISITED Egypt to study and to try to learn something of the life of the Egyptian woman. I did not expect to fully understand her, but I wanted to know as much as is possible for a woman of that hurrying, bustling, new country, America, to know of the slow, lethargic woman of the Orient. I realized that the foundation of our knowledge of a people must be an understanding of their country, for social structure depends primarily upon labour, and labour is determined by place. I knew that I must see the country, the people at work and at play, and the outside conditions governing the lives of these shut-in women, these vast numbers of unseen people who really sway the minds and motives of the Egyptian men.

Even the word " Egypt " brings a confused picture to the mind of the person from the West. The imagination has been imbued with the surpassing

interest of the country which has existed for him in images of the Pyramids and the Sphinx; in stories of the Pharaohs and the toil of millions of slaves, who spent their lives in building for the dead; in the loves of Cleopatra, and the old, old Temples where, in strange picture words, are inscribed the stories of the people who lived so many thousands of years ago.

I expected much of Egypt, and at first I was disappointed at its modernity. I half hoped to be immediately transported to the land of the *Arabian Nights*, to walk through streets like those which resounded to the footsteps of Saladin, to see bazaars with Oriental hangings, to surprise sombre, dark eyes of the East peering at me from enclosing moushrabeah. Instead I saw the bustling town of Port Said, which is dirty and tawdry beyond description. I consoled myself with the thought that Cairo would be the city of my dreams, that it would realize for me all the longings for the dreamy, indolent Orient which I had been cherishing for many years. I found that it too was modern, and that it must be studied step by step.

One does not pass at once to the Cairo of the Egyptians, but one lingers on the hotel terraces and studies the cosmopolitan life that is surging

around him in this meeting place of the East and the West.

During the season, that is from November until March, there is always a well-dressed crowd sitting around the little tables on the big verandahs of the hotels. One sees the French woman with her exaggerated styles, the American, looking as if she had just come from her Fifth Avenue milliner, the heavy but practical German frau with her heavier husband and uninteresting daughters, and finally the English woman with her blasé air and feather boa, both indispensable adjuncts of the up-to-date English woman traveller.

The Cook's tours pass by, sun-burned, tired people who have seen so many mummies and tried so hard to understand and remember the names of the rulers of the different dynasties, that they have a dazed, baffled look in their weary eyes. Yet when they return to Lincolnshire or Kansas they will take back with them the memories of the wonderful country of sunshine, and life will never be quite the same little, common round again. Their minds will have become broadened and enriched with the knowledge of these foreign lands, and they will have learned that there are other countries quite as interesting as England or America.

After watching these polyglot people on the terraces, the street calls for one's attention. The walks are filled with Egyptians selling every imaginable thing to the foolish over-the-seas people, who always seem to have an unlimited supply of money to squander upon things that certainly cannot be called the necessities of life. You hear a voice say softly, "Buy post card, missie, pretty post card. Twenty-four, only twenty-four piastres, very pretty," and you look down into a pair of big brown eyes. Do not let him tempt you, for he belongs to a numerous family—men with shawls spangled with silver or gold which they throw over their shoulders and allow to hang down to the walk, in order that you may admire their glistening beauties; men with innumerable strings of beads around their necks, the gay colours and arrangements of which tempt you. You succumb, and then pass the rest of the afternoon wondering to whom at home you will dare give these things, as, taken from the black man's neck, they seem out of place and rather tawdry.

There are bead pocket-books from the Soudan, ostrich-feathers, scarabs "Three thousand years old, true, three thousand years old," and you know, and the vendor is afraid that you know, that they were made last week in a little village out

CAIRO SHERBET.

A BLACK MAN WITH BEADS AND FLY SWITCHES.

STREET MERCHANTS.

beyond the Pyramids. But when you laugh, he laughs with you and says, " Malaish, sell you three for a shilling ? " and you shake your head; and he sells them to the lady from Chicago who " dotes on scarabs," and is not worried whether they are ancient or young so long as they are green and look Eastern.

I doubt if she has ever heard of the symbolism attached to this little green toy which she holds in her hand—how the beetle lays its egg in the sand by the river's edge, encloses it in a ball of clay and rolls it to a safe place on the edge of the desert, and then dies, living again in the new life that comes from the sun-warmed egg. To the Egyptian, because of its untiring energy, the beetle with its strength, and its death after duty accomplished, became the emblem of the creative and preserving power, and of the immortality of the soul, and, perhaps, of resurrection after death. Through the veneration of Old Egypt this little black beetle has become known throughout the world. He became a hieroglyphic and stood for a word meaning both " to be " and " to transform," and his portrait is seen on temple walls, engraved on gems found in the tombs of kings, moulded on pottery, worn as jewels, and embalmed with the dead.

On this crowded walk there is always the irrepressible and necessary fly-switch boy. Every one buys a fly-switch the same day he buys his sun-helmet, and if it can be manipulated without putting out the eyes it is a comfort in this land where the flies are a veritable pest. Flies anywhere are a nuisance, but in most civilized countries they will go away when spoken to, or brushed gently from the visage. Not so the Egyptian fly, force must be used; he must be scraped off, then, if not discouraged, he immediately comes back again. If you are poor, or have just come back from the Nile trip, when you are sure to feel most crushing poverty, you buy a switch made from the shredded palm-leaf; but if you are feeling especially opulent, you invest in one of white horse-hair with an elaborately carved ivory handle. One becomes so accustomed to seeing these in the tourists' hands that he is not surprised when in the tomb of some king the guide says in his dogmatic, professorial tone, "Ladies and gentlemen, you see before you the picture of Rameses the Great. You will note that he has on his head the double crown of Egypt, in his right hand the key of life, and in his left hand a fly-switch."

Within a few moments' walk from the hotel are

the purely native streets of Cairo, which are mere lanes lined with little narrow cupboard-like shops where the merchants sit cross-legged in front of their wares and watch with stolid gaze the crowds as they pass. These streets are filled with every sort of traffic. The people walk in the middle of the road, as there are no side walks, dodging the swiftly moving carriages or motors, whose drivers, like the chauffeurs of Paris, seem to feel that they are entitled to the right of way and that the foot-passenger is an interloper.

If the carriage does not run one down he may be gently pushed aside by a little grey donkey, with his gaily coloured saddle and string of blue beads around his neck. On this diminutive animal's back sits the donkey-boy, who begs you to see the sights from his tiny back instead of walking, which latter form of exercise is never understood by the Easterner, who cannot understand how one who has the price of any kind of a ride would prefer to walk. Often the donkeys trotting down the streets are horribly overloaded with great bags of merchandise that leave only a pair of despondent ears and a dejected tail to tell that it is not a moving mass of *bersein*, or the entire belongings of some household on the march.

Often we hear the shrill cry of the donkey-boy and move aside to allow the donkey to amble by with his comfortable little jog trot, and we peer at the woman, completely swathed in a winding-sheet of black, who rides astride and holds her child in front of her. This little beast of burden is also used to draw a most picturesque two-wheeled cart with a flat top on which several women sit cross-legged, nothing but their eyes showing above their ugly wooden nose-piece that holds the veil in place. These women are going to a wedding or to visit some friend, or to the cemetery to mourn for a lost one, and the cart is cheaper than a donkey apiece and also offers the advantage of gossip *en route*.

Donkeys are omnipresent in Egypt, and with each little animal is a boy who runs behind him and gives queer wails that the donkey seems to understand, and often beats him. There is a story told that once upon a time a donkey died, and because of his patient life he was taken to the donkey heaven. He went up the long staircase and looked into the doorway opened for him by the saint who had that particular heaven in charge. He saw great stacks of hay and piles of grain lying in the sunshine, and his delight knew no bounds. He stepped one foot inside and cocked forward one

WOMEN GOING TO PAY A VISIT.

long ear, and was just ready to place the other eager foot across the threshold, when he heard a familiar sound. He stopped; his other ear went forward; he listened intently, then he stepped backward and looked at the door-keeper inquiringly. "Do I hear aright?" said he. "Are there small boys here?" "There are," said the saint impatiently. "Come in, you are causing a draught." The donkey gave one last long look at the hay and the fine yellow grain, then stepped slowly backward, his ears laid down dejectedly. He looked down the long stairway leading to the nether regions, and said sadly to the door-keeper, "If you'll excuse me, I'll go below. I'll risk the ills I know not of!"

Once in a while a dignified camel pushes his way through the crowd, and for him every one must make way, as he is no respecter of persons, and he will walk over you or bite you, or both, if given an opportunity.

The mixture of people fascinates the person from a country where every one dresses and looks alike. Here are Greeks and Persians, each with his peculiar dress; dark, swarthy Bedouins in flowing garments and turbans bound with ropes of twisted camel's hair; black Abyssinians, men from Kur-

distan, dervishes with long brown cloaks, priests from the Coptic Church, men from the desert with tanned faces and swinging stride, dragomen with their gorgeous costumes and impertinent faces guiding the sensation-seeker from the West, all one heterogeneous mixture, composing the charm of Cairo. There is the foreignized Egyptian in ordinary coat and trousers, but with the red fez in place of a hat. He may be walking with an Egyptian of the old school who is dressed in a long, black broadcloth cloak nearly touching the ground in the back, and open in front to show the under-dress of rich tan-coloured silk. He wears a white cloth wrapped around his fez, giving it a turban effect.

This turban is very much respected, and in rich families there is a special chair on which it rests at night. The chair is often one of the articles of furniture which the bride brings with her to her new home, and is never used for any other purpose than holding the turban of her lord. For some reason all the people of the East—India, China, or Egypt—show great respect for the head-covering, and there can be no more deadly insult offered an Oriental than to touch his turban with disrespect. In street fights the main object seems to be to

A WATER-CARRIER: "SWEET WATER FOR SALE."

knock off the covering of the head, which is the final culmination of the fight.

These old-time gentlemen of Egypt nearly always wear a signet ring with the name, or initials, and the words " His servant " stamped upon it, signifying servant or worshipper of God, or other words expressing the wearer's trust in God. It is used to sign letters and valuable papers, and its impression is considered more valuable than writing the name. Therefore the giving of the ring to another is the utmost sign of confidence. " And Pharaoh took off his signet-ring from his hand and put it upon Joseph's hand," reads the Scripture.

Everywhere in the crowded streets of Cairo are water-carriers with huge goat-skins filled with water, shouting their cry " Sweet water to drink, thanks be to God ! " Sellers of sherbet or lemonade offer their drinks from large brass vessels carried on the hip. They often put a wreath of flowers about the spout of the jar, and a huge piece of ice stands upright in the neck. They strike two little brass cups together to make their wares known to the thirsty public, and the sound can be heard at all times of night or day from every street and alley of the crowded city.

There are women with baskets of oranges on their

heads, vegetable sellers, men with great barrows of cucumbers which the Egyptian eats as a fruit, never taking the trouble to peel them, saying that the best part of the fruit is in the coarse outside covering; boys carrying trays of bread formed into rings and covered with cardamom seeds. At the street corners people are sitting at rest crunching sugar-cane between their strong white teeth. These beautiful teeth, glistening in the dark faces, instantly attract the notice of the foreigner, and the Egyptians are very proud of them. It is one of the things about which the Prophet Mohammed was most particular, and he laid down stringent laws in regard to their care.

Street kitchens are a common sight, a great brass tray holding food and a tiny charcoal-stove, carried on the head of a man. If you care to patronize him, he will stop, set down his load, and cook you a meal, or if you prefer it, he will cook the food you have purchased elsewhere. Then, if you are a true native, you will sit cross-legged in the street and eat your dinner, utterly oblivious of the crowds around you.

Along a certain street are the scribes sitting before their desks, or squatting on the ground, with patrons solemnly dictating their letters to them.

THE PUBLIC LETTER-WRITERS, CAIRO.

These scribes are necessary, because it is only lately that education has been thought necessary for the masses. At the last census it was found that only eighty-five from every thousand males could read, and three from every thousand females. The professional scribe carries an ink-horn in his belt, as in the times spoken of by Ezekiel: "and one man in the midst of them, clothed in linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side."

Along these streets the houses are high and narrow. The upper stories project, and from these again are windows covered with lattice-work in brown weather-stained wood. Long rafters, from which hang pieces of matting, allow straggling sunbeams to filter down upon the riot of colour seen within the tiny shops. Each trade has its quarter. There is the shoemakers' bazaar, where you walk down alleys lined with red and yellow slippers, Persian slippers, slippers from Tunis, slippers embroidered in gold, in pearls, slippers for street wear and for the pretty feet of women within the harems, slippers with turned-up toes that look as if they had just stepped from one of the stories of the *Arabian Nights*. There are also hard wooden slippers that are worn by women in their baths, and which were used for

many other purposes, if tales are true—for the beating of disobedient slaves, or, as history tells us, they were once the means of putting to death a queen who had offended her women beyond bearing.

The brass and copper shops attract the eye with their displays of hammered trays and stately ewers, their incense-burners engraved with quotations from the Koran, or their drinking-cups which are polished until their sides shine like soft golden-coloured satin. In the saddle bazaar one may stop and watch the men working at the embroidered saddles, or decorating the bridles with the blue beads which seem to be the especial dress of the patient donkey. In the gold- and silver-smiths' bazaar one sees in cases the elaborately wrought gold necklaces and pendants that are worn by the Egyptian women, and often sitting on the seat in front of the open shop are black-shawled women handling with covetous fingers the things that appeal to women from all over the world. The shops in which are sold the precious stones make little display, but if you step inside, the proprietor will pour before you great handfuls of turquoises, sapphires, rubies, and curious stones that seem to belong to this land of the mysterious.

FRESH BREAD.

EVERYTHING FOR THE KITCHEN.

STREET MERCHANTS.

Nearly all of these shops are simply recesses in which the goods are stored on shelves, within easy reach of the owner sitting cross-legged on the floor, the purchaser taking a seat beside him while bargaining for the goods. This is a work of time and patience. If you look as if you are going to buy, the proprietor will serve you with tiny cups of Turkish coffee. It seems most hospitable of him, but be sure, at the conclusion of the purchase, you will pay for the coffee many times over. These Cairo shop-keepers are not in business for the sake of their health, and their avarice is proverbial, especially where the unbeliever is concerned.

There are many charms of Cairo besides the bazaars and winding streets. It is said that there are nearly three hundred mosques besides innumerable shrines. A few of the mosques are beautiful and impress one with their dignity and calm. There is nothing tawdry in even the poorest mosque, and the worshippers bowing, rising, and reverently touching their heads to the floor, make one want to learn more of this wonderful religion and the Prophet who has still such a hold upon the millions of people in this Eastern land.

We were fortunate in our day for our first sight of a mosque, as it happened to be the four hundredth

anniversary of one of the famous mosques. All the streets leading to it were hung with red flags, the star and crescent embroidered on them in white, and in front of the building, which extended for a square, a canopy of Egyptian embroidery in soft colours of red and black and yellow covered the whole width of the narrow street. It softened the crude effects of red flags and great glass chandeliers suspended from cross-beams until in the dim light it looked like a miniature fairyland.

The building was crowded with worshippers and the doorways filled with men dropping their shoes at the entrance and stepping over the sill in the prescribed way, the right foot foremost, then turning and taking up their shoes, holding them soles together. They were placed in front of the owner while at prayers, in order, as some scoffer suggested, that he might keep his eye on them and see that they were not taken by the devotee who finished his prayers before him. One can readily see why, outside of respect for one's temple, shoes are not worn inside a mosque. The worshippers sit upon the floor, and it would soon become soiled if allowed to be trodden upon with shoes that had been walking through the dirty streets of the city.

This was the first time that we had seen the followers of Mohammed at prayer, and we were deeply impressed with their reverence. Some were prostrate, their foreheads touching the mat in front of them, some were kneeling, others standing with clasped hands. They did not even notice us as we peered at them from the open doorway, and we waited to hear the khateeb give his evening sermon, standing on the steps of the pulpit, a wooden sword in his hand. This sword is held to commemorate the acquisition of Egypt by the sword, and is never used except in a country or town that has been acquired by the Moslems from unbelievers.

The call to prayer is heard from the minarets five times a day, but the modern man of affairs in Egypt generally responds to it at the most three times, as it takes time to perform the ablutions, and the prayers themselves are long. In the court-yards of the mosques are fountains which now are of running water and sanitary. In the olden time there was much to be desired in the question of cleanliness, as the tanks were not changed as often as is considered necessary to comply with the present ideas of sanitation. With especial words at every stage of progress the pious Moslem must

wash his hands three times " in the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," three times rinse his mouth, three times his nostrils, his ears, his face, his head, and his neck ; then his right hand and arm, and then his left, his right foot and his left. If the prayer is to be said in the desert where there is no water, Mohammed allowed sand to be used.

The prayer itself requires closest adherence to the prescribed laws in the Koran. The feet must be properly placed ; the open hands must be raised to either side of the face, the thumbs touching the lobes of the ears ; the bowing and kneeling and prostrating must be in accordance with the words of the prayer. A mistake in the ritual, and the prayer must be commenced over again. That is one reason why the Mohammedan seems so earnest in his prayers and pays no attention to any one visiting the mosque, or any distraction near him. He must concentrate upon his prayers, in word and act follow the prescribed ritual, or else he believes them inffectual. I have seen a man praying on a street corner, utterly oblivious of the crowds passing him, and have also seen a shop-keeper behind his counter bowing, kneeling, and going through all the forms necessary, while his patrons

waited patiently for him to finish his petitions before making known their wants.

In each mosque is a sort of alcove or mihrab, as it is called, towards which the believer faces when at prayer. This is to direct the prayers towards Mecca, and whether in the desert, in the street, or kneeling beside the waiting camel in the fields, it is always in this direction that the praying Moslem looks when calling upon his God. In the early days of Mohammed all of his followers prayed towards Jerusalem, but because of his hatred of the Jews, it is said in the early days of his preaching he changed the direction of his devotion and commanded his followers to pray toward the Kaabah at Mecca.

Outside the mosque was a most beautiful fountain enclosed in a screen of exquisitely carved wood, and in the room above it a school where the Koran was taught.

The three things seem to be associated in the Moslem mind, education, water, and religion, as nearly all mosques have a school in connection with them, and a place where the thirsty may drink.

When we finally left the mosque it was dark, and the cafés were full of the men having their evening coffee. They were sitting around the little tables

which were ranged along the sides of the streets, smoking great water pipes and gossiping of business and politics and the many things that interest men from any part of the world. There were no women to be seen, it seemed a man's world. In the restaurants the waiters were busy dipping cooked beans and lentils from great copper jars which sat on charcoal fires. Over the beans a few chopped onions were sprinkled, oil poured, a dash of salt, and then either given to the customers sitting around the rough tables or handed to the servant or child who wished to carry them home for the evening meal. Other restaurants made a speciality of broiled meats on spits that smelled most appetizing as they sizzled over the glowing charcoal. All kinds of sweets were laid upon the counters of the Syrian cake-shops, and in one place, exposed as a particular delicacy, were little bowls of soured thick milk, with crushed almond-nuts sprinkled over the top.

The prevailing odour of the food of the common people is onions. I heard the onion crop was the best for many seasons, that there were two million sacks grown, and I am sure it was not one onion too many. There will be a shortage before the time of onions comes again. The food of the poor man is

LOADING ONIONS ON THE BANK OF THE NILE.

bread, which is always in the form of a thick round cake. It is most deceptive as it is hollow, and it is within the hollow that the Egyptian peasant or workman slices his onion, and then he sits upon his heels as only an Easterner can, and, unmindful of the people around him, has his feast. It must be rather a dry and unexciting diet, and without the onions would be tasteless. It reminds one of the peasants of Italy, who rub a piece of garlic over their bread, spread a little oil upon it, and call it dinner.

Bread is the staff of life to the Egyptians and is much respected. Not the least bit of it must be wasted, as they have practically the same saying in regard to bread that the Chinese have in regard to rice—"He who wastes rice, eats sorrow." A man who has lived long in Cairo said he had seen an Egyptian take up a small piece of bread which had by accident fallen into the street and place it near the kerb, so that dogs might eat it rather than allow it to be trodden underfoot.

There are many restaurants in Cairo where the tables are out of doors, often in some small street connecting two main thoroughfares. These restaurants are generally owned by Greeks, and if the food is not so good as in the hotels and the big

restaurants on the Kaiser en Nil, the amusement offered is far beyond anything these big Europeanized hostelries can give to the jaded globe-trotter looking for "local colour." One need not go to a theatre, nor need one go to a shop to buy anything he might wish to wear, to eat, to use in the making of his toilet, or furnishings for his house. The shops are brought to the tables. We simply sit down and the cosmopolitan world of the poorer classes passes before our eyes.

We taste our soup and tell the lottery man that we do not wish to invest, shake our head at the Syrian with the laces and the shawls, reach for the salt and tell the Indian we cannot purchase carved wood fans or sandalwood boxes, and will take his word for it that the wood is from Mysore or Lebanon and do not care to smell it. The live chickens are gently removed from their too near proximity to the fish, and we insist that neither live canary birds, parrots, shrimps, nor gold-fish will be purchased. The post-card boy and the man with the collapsible what-nots is told to hurry by, and we only laugh at the man who looks like a patent clothes-line on wash Monday, so thoroughly is he covered with a nondescript outfit of underclothing. We do not care for kimonos,

toothbrushes, bedroom furniture, nor slippers. The infants' clothing does not tempt us, nor do the perfume, coat hangers, or live geese. But our refusal does not discourage these polite salesmen. They move on, to make way for another, and then return again and again, they or their brothers, all looking so much alike that it is impossible to distinguish Mohammed Ali from Youssuf.

The little boy tumbles and then begs with pretty pleading eyes for backsheesh, and we feel hard-hearted that we do not give it to him. We have just given our small change to a gentlemanly looking person who came with a flourish and put his little tin in front of us, and we wondered who he was. As I started to take the change lying so temptingly before me, thinking that it was some kindly Egyptian manner of making us welcome to his city, he pointed to another gentleman leaning pensively against the wall with a violin in his hand, and we realized that he was not a Spanish don, but just one of the Italian street musicians. He was so knightly and so gentlemanly and so well dressed that we could not give him the half piastre, or penny, that we had intended to contribute, and gave him the whole piastre, and his bow in return for our royal munificence was surely enough reward.

But it means that we feel we have been extravagant, and consequently slight the juggler who has been throwing sticks of fire into the air and catching them dexterously in his mouth, and nearly refuse the blind man who has been making doleful sounds upon a flute. The old man with long white beard who looks as if he were an old salt from Yarmouth receives no money, and we hear low muttered curses as he moves away. Then coming up seemingly from the ground is a tiny girl who has a baby and a woman attached to her, and she begs us "For the love of Allah, remember the poor." We have always tried to live up to the Scriptural injunction about giving to him that asketh, but that would be quite impossible here in this Eastern country where we are asked to contribute of our plenty to him who hath not, about once every ten seconds.

The endless stream passes up and down amongst the tables, stumbling once in a while over the little girl who is picking up cigarette stumps, or running into the blind beggars. We wonder why the restaurant people allow it. Perhaps the street belongs to the blind beggar and to the itinerant salesman as much as it does to the rich restaurant-keeper. It impresses one as a most democratic proceeding,

and after seeing it one can never again believe the stories of the downtrodden, oppressed poor of the East.

We had been told before we ever saw Cairo that it was filled with Greeks and that that word was the final term for dishonesty in business; but whatever may be said about that nation generally, we had one example of honesty that considerably impressed us, on our first visit to one of these Greek restaurants, when the money question was a difficult one to solve without much time and study, especially in regard to the "little piastres" and the "big piastres." These latter are worth double the former, and the fact that the new-comer does not realize this, makes it easy for the wily Arab or Levantine to take advantage of his ignorance. When we asked for our bill, we paid it in big piastres. The waiter said nothing, but took the money.

About three weeks later we visited the same restaurant and learned that all bills were made out in "little piastres" and consequently we had paid double at the time of our first visit. We sent for the proprietor, never thinking that he would do anything, but just out of curiosity to hear what he would say. He asked us to point out the waiter, which we did. He called him to our table, and of

course it was denied. We laughed and said that we did not mind, only we wished to let him know that we considered it foolish for him to allow his waiters to do such things, and that we, being strangers, did not expect him to take our word against that of the waiter whom he knew. He, much to our astonishment, insisted on returning us our money, and discharged the waiter on the spot. I think that it was real honesty that prompted him to do this, as he did not know but that we were simply tourists whom he would never see again.

When one has seen so much of the busy, crowded streets of Cairo that its sounds jar and its colours do not attract, then he should go to the Pyramids. Do not go in the afternoon, when the place is flooded with guides and donkey-boys, and the men who want to run up the Great Pyramid and down again for a price. You will feel as did Marshall P. Wilder, the American humorist, when importuned by one of these men. He offered him five dollars if he would run up and down the pyramid twenty times in succession. The man said, "But, master, that would kill me." Marshall said, "That is what I am paying for."

People do queer things here at the Pyramids, things they would never do at home. No lady in a

THE GREAT SPHINX AND THE PYRAMIDS.

hobble skirt would like to be pulled up the sides of a twenty-story building, with two athletic men dragging at her arms, and another husky one pushing her from the back, but she bravely and energetically does something just as ridiculous, and goes home and proudly boasts that she climbed the Great Pyramid.

The way to see the Pyramids and that most wonderful sight, the Sphinx, is to go to the Mena house and have tea sitting on the verandah with the Pyramids in front of you. You watch them as they stand out dark and strong in the fading light, and you listen for the voice of the woman who haunts the Third Pyramid and comes to the doorway and cries for the loved one she has lost. She comes at sunset and at noon, and the Arabs say her voice can be heard quite distinctly when the wind is from the west.

When the moon has risen and all the travellers have either gone in to dinner or else started for Cairo, you stroll up the winding path leading to the Pyramids. Perhaps you will see them as we did, with no one around except an old guardian dressed in flowing white robes, who, as we were standing before the monstrous piles of stone and masonry, knelt down, his face to Mecca, and, quite oblivious of the

infidels' presence, prayed his prayer to Allah. We left him kneeling there in the moonlight and went farther down the road to the Sphinx. Great scientists tell us that its puzzle has been solved, that it is no more a thing of mystery, but one sees in this great pile of stones what one brings to it and no more. It may be to him simply a much marred statue, or it may be the symbol of Egypt waiting. At any rate you will return to Cairo feeling you have been in touch with something big and wonderful, something that suggests all the mystery and fascination of the East.

CHAPTER III

LIFE ALONG THE NILE

THE second step in studying the life of Egypt is to go up the Nile. Egypt is a country dominated by a river, and that river is the Nile. One cannot think of Egypt apart from the narrow, sluggish black stream of water that winds so leisurely for many months. When the rains fall in Abyssinia and fill the great river, it overflows upon the land, where it is allowed to remain for forty days, then, receding, leaves its wealth of rich mud that is Egypt's treasure. It transforms the arid, rainless country into a Garden of Eden, and one can easily see why the Egyptians revere it and have many legends in regard to its origin. By some it is believed that it rises in the Mountains of the Moon ; others that it is formed by the tears of Isis weeping for Osiris ; some tell the story of the Great Nile god who came forth from his cavern, and from his mouth cast forth the stream of water that brings its blessing to all of his people.

When we read of the richness of Egypt it is hard to realize what a small country it really is, and how absolutely dependent it is upon the waters of the Nile for its very life. The valley is only about ten miles wide, except in the Delta, where it is 200 miles from Port Said to Alexandria, and it is about 750 miles long. One can sit on the boat and see the mountains that shut in the valley on each side, from the Desert of Sahara on the west and from the Arabian Desert on the east. Without the Nile, Egypt would be a part of these great deserts.

From the deck of the Nile steamer I looked upon another world. The people seem to be real people, going about their everyday life in exactly the same way that they have done for six thousand years. They do not seem to be dressed and staged for the influx of foreigners as they do in Cairo.

We stopped at many of the villages, which are simply a collection of sand-coloured walls that enclose the low palm-thatched houses of unbaked bricks cemented together with mud. They look like mere hovels, and it is rare that a more pretentious house of two stories is to be seen. There are no windows in the houses, but the chambers of the better ones have apertures high up in the walls for the admission of light and air. A few palm-

A DAHABIYEH ON THE NILE.

trees in the courtyards make the glare less terrifying, but I wondered how it could be bearable in the summer when the hot winds from the Sahara sweep across, with no protection from the shifting sands or the scorching rays of a tropical sun.

These villages look pretty from a distance nestling in the midst of their stately palm-trees, but when they are entered, the illusion quickly fades before the reality. Everything is the colour of the desert. Within the dust-covered walls of the houses mothers sit, clothed in black or blue gowns that seem to have taken on the sad colour of their surroundings. The children they carry in their arms are sickly looking, and in nine cases out of ten have sore, fly-covered eyes. There are no comforts within the bare rooms, the only furniture a few benches, a few cooking-pots, some stones in a corner over which a fire is made, or perhaps an oven in which the bread is baked. In the mud-enclosed yard outside the door is generally an old man lying in the shade of the house, where the donkey or perhaps the camel keeps him company. The dogs bark, and the children run *from* one, which is better than in the more sophisticated towns, where they run *after* one and cry the only word of welcome they know—" Backsheesh."

The prominent building in every village of any size is the mosque. Passing by the door we heard the drone of many voices and knew that there was a school inside. Removing our shoes, we tip-toed across the room and found a dozen little boys sitting on the floor around their master, chanting sentences from the Koran, with the rhythmic swaying of their bodies forwards and backwards that is supposed to be an aid to youthful memory. At our appearance there was a sudden cessation of all sounds, and twelve pairs of unwinking black eyes stared at us, until we felt uncomfortably like intruders.

The master, with true Eastern politeness, invited us to enter, and we stayed to hear the parrot-like repetition of the verses, that really mean nothing to the child who commits them to memory. Yet, in the olden days, the committing to memory of the entire Koran was often the only education an Egyptian boy received, and to show how assiduously he studied his sacred book, statistics show us that 5,565 boys could repeat the entire Koran by heart, 4,076 knew one-half of it, 9,145 could repeat one-quarter of it, and 110,844 could repeat many of its chapters or surahs. When one remembers that the Koran contains about as

BREAD IN ASSIUT: PUT IN THE SUNNY STREET TO RISE.

many words as the New Testament, one realizes the enormity of the task.

To enter El Azhar, the great Moslem University in Cairo, it is necessary to repeat by heart one-half the Koran, and then the student must give up the next ten or twelve years of his life to the study of the book and its tradition and interpretations. Afterward he will be a full-fledged Sheikh and return to his native village as an interpreter of the sacred law or a teacher.

To hear the Koran chanted by a professional is like hearing a beautiful piece of music. It is not read nor droned, but each word has its special tone, and the Arabic lends itself specially to the minor melody of the East.

These old schools are giving way to the Government schools which are being established everywhere throughout the country, and the old schoolmaster is being compelled to seek another profession. It is hard for him, because often he is a man entirely ignorant of everything except the Koran, which he has committed to memory. There is a story told in *The Thousand and One Nights* which illustrates the ignorance of the old time schoolmaster who belonged to the Egypt of other days, the Egypt of the corvée and the forced labour,

the Egypt that preferred blinding one eye of the son rather than having him drafted into the Army. A new man was employed as the village teacher, and he could neither read nor write. One day a poor woman brought to him a letter to read. It was from her son who was on a pilgrimage, and who wished to tell her that he would soon be home with her. The schoolmaster did not wish his ignorance known, so he looked gravely at the letter and said nothing. The mother, becoming frightened, inferred from his silence that it contained bad news. Rather than ask a direct question regarding an unhappy event, she took the circuitous way of the East to find out what she wished to know. "Shall I shriek?" she asked. The master answered "Yes." "Shall I tear my clothes?" Again he answered "Yes." The woman returned home and performed the ceremonies for the dead. Within a few days her son returned. She went to the schoolmaster and said, "Why did you cause me so much sorrow? My son is not dead. He has returned to me." Nothing abashed, the old man replied, "How could I know that your son would arrive in safety from his long journey? Many things might have happened to him. It were better that you should think him dead,

PIGEON-HOUSES IN A VILLAGE: THE PIGEONS ARE CARED FOR BY THE WOMEN.

than be led to expect him and then be disappointed."

As we came from the mosque we stumbled against a man who smiled at us and followed us, laughing and talking half to himself and half to any one who might listen. He was evidently deranged, or else had not been granted the usual amount of intelligence. The people of Egypt never ill-treat the mad nor the simple-minded, because the Koran says, "The fool is one whom God hath made his temple for a while, thereafter withdrawing. None shall injure the temple."

Another public building that attracted our attention was the village incubator. The Egyptian hens have had their eggs hatched for them for so many centuries that they have lost all maternal inclinations, so the housewife takes the eggs to the man in charge of the incubator, who guarantees her a certain number of chickens from the eggs received. Near this utilitarian industry was a pigeon-house that evidently belonged to the village. It was made of many earthen pots of an oval form with a wide mouth placed outwards, and a small hole at the other end. Each pair of pigeons occupy a separate pot. The Egyptians have been famous for centuries for their carrier-pigeons.

Even to-day it is said that when the native wishes to send news that might embroil him with the Government if discovered, the carrier-pigeon is used. At the rising of a Mahdi the British officials could not find out how the news was sent from one place to another with such swiftness, but it was finally traced to the use of the carrier-pigeons.

There is a story told of how these birds were used in the olden time to save the nation. A ruler of Egypt had a wife from Damascus who became tired of the desert and wished to return to her home lands, but also did not care to leave her lord amidst the many temptations which might influence him to forget her while away. She spent long hours in trying to devise means of tempting him from his luxurious capital, and cause him to desire a visit to his dominions of Syria. Finally, knowing his weakness, which was love for the joys of the table, she began to tell him of the wonderful cherries of Damascus—they had no equal in all the world; and her glowing pictures of their colour, their exquisite aroma, the delicacy of their flavour, so worked upon the imagination of the gourmet that he announced to the Vizier the necessity of a visit to his Eastern possessions, and commanded preparations for a state tour of that country.

The Vizier was alarmed, because he knew that when the ruler left his capital, the revolt which was slumbering would break into flame. He tried to find out the reason why the Caliph wished to leave the luxuries of which he was so fond, and, by the help of his wife and the harem gossips, learned the story of the cherries. Then this wily old diplomat pretended to prepare for the journey, but asked for time, as the Caliph must travel with great state and ceremony, and would need hundreds of people in his train. He sent word secretly that every one who owned a carrier-pigeon of great swiftness should bring it to the palace on a certain day. He had the fleetest camels waiting with great cages on their backs, to which the pigeons were transferred as soon as they arrived. The camels left, and things were quiet.

After a time the Vizier began to spend the mornings on his house-top looking towards the east, and one morning his vigils were rewarded, for a cloud seemed covering the eastern sky. It came nearer, and was found to be the flight of weary home-coming pigeons, each with a cherry under its wing. The servants of the Vizier were hours heaping the bright red cherries of Damascus upon golden salvers to be taken to the Caliph, and soon

it was announced that the trip to Syria was abandoned as too arduous for a man of age and dignity, and the country was saved from rebellion.

If the villages are disappointing, the cities are more so. Nothing is uglier or more depressing than the ordinary city along the Nile. The streets are mere lanes of dust, and the houses a succession of windowless mud walls, with here and there a white-washed house of the better class, but still looking neglected and unkept, as if its owners had begun well, but had become tired of the fight against the heat and the sand, and had at last decided to permit the encroaching desert to work its will, and reduce the one-time gaily painted walls to its own monotonous grey.

The streets on which are the bazaars are roofed over with torn matting, and are merely a succession of little cupboard-like shops in which one sees, instead of the carpets of the East, and the brass and carving for which one is for ever searching, gaudy cotton goods from Manchester, oil lamps, tin trunks, bicycles, Bass's ale, Cross & Blackwell's preserves, clocks, and the many cheap articles that seem to have such a fascination for the Easterner, who feels that he is truly a cosmopolitan when he fills his home with the gaudy products of the West.

The crowds elbow one, and the donkeys, the camels, the chatter, the dust, and the flies all make one feel that an Egyptian town is inspected best from the deck of a boat anchored at a safe distance from the bank, where one can observe the rather unprepossessing population without coming in too close proximity with them. They do not look healthy or strong, yet are a most virile race, dominating every race with which it comes in contact. Subdued again and again by alien nations, intermixed for centuries with foreign peoples, they simply fuse these outside elements into their own common mould, reverting always to the early type and remaining Egyptians to the last.

Only a special breed of man can survive the burning suns and can get a living from the rainless lands. It is said that foreign children will not survive in Egypt, and that children of a European father and an Egyptian mother will die in infancy unless allowed to live as do the Egyptian children. Egypt is the same as India, China, and Japan in one respect. Descendants of mixed marriages, after the third generation, show no touch of their foreign blood, but become truly native with all the traits of the Easterner, restored in their original purity.

We were glad to pass the villages and see the

fields covered with green at this time of the year. There is barley and wheat, fields upon fields of onions, beans and vegetables unknown to the Western eye, and, taking the place of hay, a sort of clover or lucerne that has a small red blossom. Near sundown the children and women take the camels and cows, the donkeys and the sheep, and tether them in a line across the fields of clover that each may eat his allotted portion for the day.

One sees great flocks of dark brown sheep grazing, and often in such barren places that one wonders if thousands of years of desert life have accustomed Egyptian sheep to sand as a diet. The shepherd is generally an old man, with his long white or brown cloak and staff in hand, looking as if he had just stepped from the hills of Judea.

Along the Nile about every hundred yards is the shadoof, a machine used for irrigation. It is a bucket suspended to a weighted pole between two posts. A man stands by the water and fills the bucket, which is lifted by the weight at the end of the pole, and emptied by the man standing on the bank. It is a laborious process, causing the brown-bodied, lightly clad man to stoop and rise, stoop and rise, with the regularity of clockwork. The shadoof seems as old as the Nile itself. We

DRAWING WATER.

see it pictured in the tombs at Thebes, and the men now working them along the banks look as if they had wandered down from the pictured walls.

At other places is a sakkia, a wheel which a camel or a bullock turns, walking in continuous circles, the creaking of the cumbrous wheel keeping time to the song of the sakkia, which is often chanted by the small boy sitting on his throne in the centre of the wheel, touching the slow-moving animal who wishes to loiter on his monotonous way.

Turn, O Sakkia, turn to the right, and turn to the left ;
The heron feeds by the water-side—shall I starve in my onion-field ?
Shall the Lord of the world withhold His tears that water the land ?
Turn, O Sakkia.

The Nile floweth by night and the balasses are filled at dawn,
The maid of the village shall bear to my bed the dewy grey goolah at dawn,
Turn, O Sakkia.

Along the Nile one sees the same scenery over and over again, yet it never seems to grow monotonous: the level bank sloping down to the river, the green of the fields, the mud villages with their encircling palm groves; the water-wheel, the shadoof, the peasant ploughing with his ox yoked to the heavy wooden plough in the same manner

as did his forefathers; the desert with its hillocks and valleys and its background of blue-grey mountains. Once in a while a water-buffalo is seen covered up to his shoulders in the water, or a woman in her black dress and trailing shawl comes with a huge water-jar laid sidewise upon her head, and having filled it, replaces it in an upright position, walking away with the stately grace that seems to be only given to these women who carry burdens upon their heads.

In the distance a camel may be seen with a man sitting cross-legged upon his back. The camel is everywhere—in fact he and the palm-tree seem to belong to Egypt. He is loaded down with sugar-cane, or great heaps of grass, or sitting down in a field waiting patiently while bags of onions are placed on his pack-saddle. When regarded closely the camel is the ugliest animal on earth, but seen against a sky-line with a palm-tree in the background, he looks as if he had just stepped out of the Book of Mystery.

There is a legend that once upon a time the camel was a beautiful Arabian horse. He did a great favour to an angel, and the angel wishing to repay him said, "What can I do to requite you for the kindness you have shown me? I will

grant you three favours." The horse thought a moment and said, "I have often wished my legs were longer so that I might use them to more advantage; then I could brush the flies from me, or lie down with more ease, or sit upon the sand." The angel said, "I will consider it; the other wishes?" The horse answered, "When I am galloping over the country and through the towns, it is lonely, as I cannot see over the walls. If my neck were longer it would amuse me to watch the people at work or at play in their gardens." The angel bowed. "And thy third and last desire?" The horse pondered long and carefully, then said, "My back is often galled by the saddle. If you could manage to provide me with a saddle that would not gall me, I would be content."

The angel went away and the horse fell into a deep sleep. When he awakened he found that his legs seemed especially limber. He could scratch his nose with his hind foot and he was delighted. As he galloped through the narrow streets he could look into the gardens, and he passed most of his time leaning his head on people's walls, to see what they did in what had been for him heretofore forbidden lands. When his master came to saddle him, lo, there was already grown a

saddle! His delight knew no bounds, and he galloped far into the country. On passing a lake he stopped to drink. As he bent over the clear waters he caught sight of his reflection. He could not believe his eyes. Was this the beautiful horse with the arching neck, the flowing tail, the graceful legs? He looked and looked, and then for the first time the camel knelt. He prayed Allah to return to him his beautiful body, his glistening coat; but the angel appeared to him and whispered in his ear, "Allah's gifts cannot be returned," and that is one of the many reasons why the camel looks mournful.

As one moves slowly up the Nile and visits the old, old Egypt, the Egypt of the temples, one is bewildered by her vastness, her antiquity. These temples can never be forgotten, although it is impossible to describe the sensations they arouse. As one stands upon the towers of Denderah, beautiful in the memory of the Egyptian Goddess of Love, or as one walks through the broken columns of Karnak, or wanders over the sun-baked hills to the tombs of the kings, one feels as if living in another world, a dead world. It is a relief to be brought back to the present, livable, human world, by seeing the tired fellah stop the loading of his camel and

kneel by his side, while echoing the name that is on the lips of all Egypt, the name of Allah, yet we know that those old dead kings were worshipping the same god although they called him Osiris or Ra or Amun.

CHAPTER IV

KEEPING HOUSE IN CAIRO

I LEARNED, after a few days' stay in Cairo, that if I were to become friends with the Egyptian lady I must have a place in which to receive her, other than a public hotel. No woman of any respectability will go to an hotel, where she may be seen by men, consequently we decided to hire an apartment after our return from Luxor. The night before we started I went across the street to the book-store where we bought our papers and magazines, and had our pictures developed, and talked with the little Greek proprietress who had always been so accommodating. I did not tell her our real reason for wishing an apartment, but told her that we were tired of sitting through long-course dinners where we had to wait until every one else had finished their course before the little bell announced that another might be served.

And it was certainly a fact that we were tired

of hotels. We fully realized the beauty of the big red-and-white dining-room at Shepheard's, the dexterity of the Arab waiters, picturesque in their spotless white gowns with red fez and belts, but we had been eating in ornate dining-rooms for many months in sundry hotels all over the world, and the novelty had worn off. We were longing for a nice beef-steak and potatoes, and the kind of sociability that permits one to prop a paper against the sugar-bowl and to place a book against the fruit-dish, and only to talk when there is something to say, or to keep silent, without the feeling that the woman at the next table is saying, "*Do* look at that couple, John. They have not spoken for twenty minutes. I am sure they are married!"

My sympathetic listener, to whom I poured out my woes, understood me perfectly. In her nice broken English she said, "Madame is quite right. Hotel life is intolerable." She would give me the name of a most charming man who had a bureau of location (a house agency), and he would find me a place that would bring me all happiness. She was so enthusiastic that my cynical soul, hardened by much travelling and repulsing the birds of prey that live upon tourists, immediately wondered if

she would receive a commission upon the rent of the apartment. Then I decided that it could not be, as no one ever comes to Cairo to keep house. They hurry through on their way to Luxor or Assuan and the tombs of the kings, giving Cairo and the bazaars and the Pyramids a hurried look, either going or coming. I learned later that she was only kindly and really wished to help, which is the attitude of most of the people of Cairo when they see you are not a globe-trotter, with only thirty minutes to give to the Sphinx, and are therefore willing to pay a dollar a minute for the sight.

I returned to the hotel and wrote to the Greek gentleman with the unpronounceable name, telling him I would be in Cairo in about six weeks and imploring his assistance. My letter was in French, which is a remarkably easy language to speak, if you are not over-particular in regard to conjugations, but it is more difficult to write. It was evidently understood, however, for when I returned I found a neat lady-like note in tiny French writing, telling me that the very place was awaiting me. Needless to say, I called immediately, and much to my surprise—I had judged him from his handwriting —I found the agent to be a big, stout Greek, looking

like a retired brigand, with flashing black eyes, and teeth that glistened from beneath his iron grey moustache.

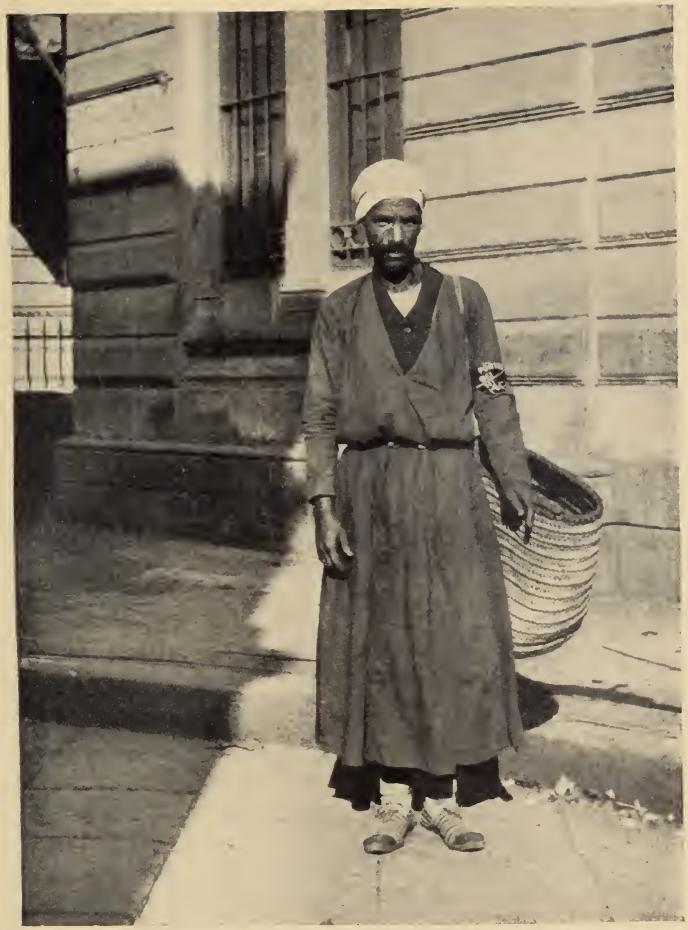
He took me to several places that were impossible, and I began to get discouraged. I sighed audibly, and told him that probably I could not find exactly what I wanted, and should be compelled to stay for the rest of my visit in Cairo at an hotel. The gentleman from Greece stopped in the middle of the street. "Madame wishes, then, really to keep house?" he asked. I assented mournfully, wondering if my French was absolutely unintelligible. I had talked of housekeeping for two hours as I climbed one pair of stairs after another with him. I went over the whole subject again.

He listened respectfully, then he put his finger to one side of his nose. "I see, I see," he said. "Madame is tired of the execrable food of the hotel. Madame has reason. She shall keep house. She shall have of the food of Cairo, the good food, the where there is no better. Ah! the young lamb! Madame, it is delicieuse—delicieuse, delicieuse; the little chickens which just now come in the market—beautiful—beautiful!" and he kissed the tips of his fingers and blew the caress lightly into the air somewhere in the direction of Heliopolis.

I was so delighted with this playfulness on the part of my rather obese friend, that we stopped again in the middle of the road, and were nearly run down by a man on a motor-cycle who left behind him expletives in several languages as he flew by.

We found the place, three rooms with kitchen and laundry. It was on the third floor of a building that a few years ago was the fashionable hotel of Cairo, in the very centre of the city, within walking distance of everything one wants to see. But it was not the location that decided me so much as the view from the three windows of the big square sitting-room. From the north we looked over the brown Libyan Hills, and from the east we saw the slow-moving Nile in the distance. There were no buildings higher than ours, and old Cairo with its mosques and minarets lay at our feet.

The night saw us installed, our books piled on the rather rickety bookshelves near the desk, which was for the sole benefit of the man who works; trunks sent to some unknown place below, and arrangements made with the Armenian woman and Arab boy who were to be our servants and guide us through the shoals that might engulf us in our new adventure. When they came to say "Good



LICENSED PORTER IN THE MARKET, CAIRO (*see p.* 109).

night!" the soft-voiced little Armenian murmured "Dormez bien!" and the Arab touched his head and then his bosom, meaning "I salute you with my head and with my heart," and as we leaned from our windows to watch the lights of Cairo we decided there were no happier people in all the world.

Much to the disgust of the Arab boy, whose name was Ramazan, I decided to go to the market with him. He explained that it was entirely unnecessary, but I also explained and insisted that I could tell nothing about the life of the native unless I went out to see it. It would not come to me, and where can one see more of the real life of the common people than in the markets where they buy their food?

We went through little streets and alleys, the boy rushing as if he were going to a fire, while I tried to keep him in view and also look at the many queer sights that greeted me at every turn. When I looked up from admiring a camel making his way slowly down the crowded street, my boy would be somewhere around the next corner or would come rushing back to find me, wondering what I could see in the stupid streets to attract me.

The market is most cosmopolitan. Practically every known language is spoken there—English,

French, Greek, Spanish, Italian, Turkish, and of course, Arabic. French, however, prevails, for France had a strong linguistic hold on Egypt for many years previous to the English occupation. The fruit and vegetables are sold by Egyptian men and women, but the butchers' shops are mainly in the hands of the French. I found to my sorrow while in Cairo, that being a foreign tradesman is not a passport for honesty. There may be something in the air of Egypt, but the French shopkeepers, both big and little, have acquired at least one of the failings of the Arab—a lack of commercial probity. But where the Arab is satisfied with a small percentage, the wily Frenchman tries to figure out how much you can be mulcted without making an outcry, and then proceeds accordingly. One must be cautious while in Cairo, to say the least.

The vegetable market is extremely good. Every known variety is temptingly displayed, and at most reasonable prices—for the Arab buyer. For instance, when I bought tomatoes I could get four for two piastres, about fivepence, but Ramazan could get for the same money ten great luscious beauties which he would choose from a basket, putting aside all that were not perfect, and which

SPINACH FOR SALE.

were sold to unsophisticated shoppers like myself. One is beset by hawkers, who carry baskets of oranges on their heads, or by the lemon-man who carries his goods concealed somewhere about his person. The strawberry-man is always in evidence, and will follow one all over the market, endeavouring to persuade one to buy his wares.

In many foreign cities it would be impossible to shop in the public market-place, but Cairo is so large and has such a mixed population that you find yourself only one of many, lost in the stream of cosmopolitanism. English women of the poorer class are there, French, Armenian, Soudanese, Jewish, and Turkish, but no native women except those who are selling produce of some kind.

At the entrance of the market are porters sitting beside their baskets, to carry home the purchases of people who have not brought a servant, and little girls wander about, begging with pretty gestures to be allowed to take your basket upon their heads and carry it for you. They charge about half the price of the licensed porters, and it is needless to say that they are chased from one place to another by the men who have paid the municipality for this chance to earn their livelihood.

In the market are Italian shops, where macaroni and pastes dear to the Italian are sold, and Greek stalls that handle only specialities from Greece. Imported delicacies from every country may be found, and for those who have a "sweet tooth," Cairo is a paradise. Besides the foreign French patisseries which sell the delicate cakes that make one think of the tea-shops in Paris, there are Syrian cake-shops, and queer places where one may buy Turkish sweets with the flavour of attar of roses. The Egyptians have within their bakeries great trays of cakes, altogether too rich, but so delicious that one forgets that greediness has its own reward.

On the way to the market we met barrow-men with great heaps of tender cucumbers that are eaten as a fruit by the natives, old and young. When one sees tiny children sitting on the kerb crunching with delight the cucumbers, skin and all, one is not surprised that the officials state that sixty-five per cent. of the babies born in Cairo die before they are four years old.

The woman selling sugar-cane and my orange-woman sat side by side upon the dusty street, gossiping and laughing between sales, flashing their black eyes from over their veils as they begged of the passer-by to eat of the sweet oranges or buy

AN ORANGE-WOMAN.

the succulent sugar-cane, if only to whiten the teeth. The orange-woman was especially pretty, with a shy sweet smile that tried to distract my attention from the bad orange she was slipping into my basket. Her lips were tattooed in little stars that extended in three lines over her chin and were lost in the necklace that she wore. Her black gown hung in straight folds to her feet, and over it was a black shawl that covered her entirely, and was held in place under her left arm. On her bare ankles were many cheap silver anklets, and her arms held bracelets of silver and glass that clinked as she moved.

A camel wandered through the narrow alleys with two enormous baskets of lettuce attached to his pack-saddle. He paid no attention to the world in general, looking as if he were still on the desert, with only the tropical sky above him and the sands beneath his padded feet. A camel may have a most undignified load—sacks of onions, or great pieces of sugar-cane trailing far behind him in the roadway—but he always holds his head proudly, and seems conscious of his dignity. The Arabs tell you that he comes by his manner in a most legitimate way, and has just cause to be proud. Every good Mohammedan knows the ninety-nine

names of Allah, but the secret of the hundredth name has been whispered only in the ear of the camel, and he will never tell it. It is this knowledge of the confidence that has been reposed in him that gives him his arrogant look and carriage.

I found it impossible to buy of the itinerant merchants, because I could tell nothing about the weight. Their scales have as weights a piece of brass, a rock, a few nails, and perhaps a little sand sprinkled on the balance to help it to adjust itself. Yet their cheating is generally infinitesimal, and it is worth the money to watch the process and perhaps get a snapshot.

The market people found me an easy customer, but when I took the Armenian woman for guide—her name, by the way, was Souprik Poutik, and we called her "Spittook" for short—they met their Waterloo. My first day's experiences were enough. I expected every moment to be taken in charge by a policeman. She beat an orange-man, who was helpless because of his enormous baskets of oranges which he tried to protect, scattering the golden balls throughout the market in his efforts to get away from her. She wrangled with the egg-man, who looked like a peaceable little fat god amongst his eggs until this termagant called him

LITTLE GIRLS WHO BEG TO CARRY HOME YOUR PURCHASES.

a thief and the son of a thief, and the father of generations of thieves, because he would not give eleven eggs for fivepence instead of ten.

On the way home she went to a barrow-man to buy from him a green vegetable looking something like parsley. I sat down on a box in the shade of a small shop, knowing it would be a process of much length and argument, as Spittook intended spending at least a sixpence of her own money. She carefully chose the different pieces of vegetable, and they were weighed. Spittook put one more piece on the scales ; the man took it out. Spittook put it back ; then they argued. The man rolled his eyes, struck attitudes, beat his chest, struck his forehead. He was being robbed, he declared ; his family would starve, etc.

In the meantime a big, awkward, half-grown goose came waddling along, looking like a bad boy playing truant. He loafed past the push cart, casting a mischievous eye aloft to see what he might chance to find lying unprotected. Lo! there was a small piece of green hanging over the side. He rose up on his toes ; he could just reach it. In pulling it down, another became loosened, and another, and another, and as the man and Spittook wrangled over one small morsel, at least

ten went down the throat of Mr. Gosling. Just as Spittook won the argument and added the extra piece to her basket, the man turned and saw the goose struggling with an especially succulent piece of his precious vegetable. His face was a tragedy, and we left him calling down curses upon women and geese alike, but with an added emphasis upon the women.

Housekeeping is made easy in Cairo through the labour of the Arab women. The laundry work was done by a tall, dark woman, who looked far too stately as she entered, robed in her long black gown and the all-enveloping shawl, to be merely the laundry woman. She sat beside a shallow-tub and rubbed the clothes with her hands, boiled them over a charcoal fire in a Standard Oil tin, and rinsed them in another. She had no conveniences whatever, but her work was well done, and the blessed sunshine and dry air aided her. Half an hour on the roof, and the linen was dry and dazzling, bleached by the scorching African sun.

The Standard Oil Company surely conferred a blessing upon Egypt when it invented the oil-tin. It is used by many women who carry water, instead of the picturesque jar they formerly balanced upon their heads; it is the universal garbage tin of the

ALFALFA FRESH FROM THE FIELDS.

poor in Egypt; it is made into slates for the youth in the native schools, and it is the storing place of vegetables, flour, beans, and clothing—in fact I have been in little huts which had no furniture except half a dozen oil-tins along one side of the room, and a big dish in which to cook the food over the three stones serving as stove. For chairs and table and bed the beaten earth was sufficient.

The working women of Cairo have a most majestic carriage that comes from the habit of carrying all their burdens on their heads. Sometimes one sees most ludicrous things carried in this manner, as when I opened my door one day and saw a woman standing with a hand sewing-machine nicely balanced upon her head. She wished to do my plain sewing. I had no work for her, but she earned a day's wages by posing for her picture, and went away very happy.

When I was ready to leave Cairo I gave an American blue-flame oil-stove to a friend, and she sent her cook for explanations in regard to its use. I lighted it for him and showed him the inner mechanism. According to the etiquette of oil-stoves, it takes about ten minutes for the oil to burn entirely out and extinguish the flame. The cook was in a hurry and would not wait, and against all my remon-

strances he placed the stove upon his head, and the last I saw of him he was walking calmly down the crowded street with a flame at least a foot high shooting out from his apparently lighted turban.

I look back to my housekeeping experiences in Cairo as one of the happiest times of my life. We worked during the day and when the sun became less hot we wandered down the narrow native streets, shopping, exploring, enjoying every bit of the Eastern life, so different from the prosaic Western world from which we came. When we were tired we sat down at some out-of-door café and drank the delicious Turkish coffee, and watched the sky turn to the sapphire blue that heralds the coming of the Egyptian night. All the Egyptian world of poor people passed us by, the street musicians entertained us, the hawkers showed their wares. When the stars came out we strolled to some hotel or restaurant for dinner or slowly climbed our stairs, thankful that we had a place that seemed like home. My Egyptian friends came to me, knowing they would be as secluded as within their own harems, and the months passed far too quickly, as we worked and played and saw Cairo as few see it.

We read of Egypt and her Pharaohs and her past grandeur, and we looked about us and saw

THE SEWING LADY.

Egypt with her new civilization, her thirst for education, her dawning respect for women, and we felt that there was a great leavening process at work in this land of the Nile. Perhaps it is due to the influence of England who holds this country in her firm but just grasp, or to the realization of the dreams of the missionaries who have been working so long with apparently few results, or it may be the fruits of that faith that made our black Berber door-keeper kneel down by the side of the steps, his face towards Mecca, and utter his prayer, unconscious of the world that came and went beside him. The call came to us five times a day from the minaret on the mosque near by, and this call to prayer had the deep, earnest note of a religion that influences all Egypt. We heard it in the morning before the day broke and as we threw back the blinds to have a good night look at the lights of Cairo, the muzzein's voice came to us in his solemn chant, " There is no God but God, and Mohammed is His Prophet."

CHAPTER V

FEMININE CHARACTERISTICS

THERE are five distinct types of women in Egypt, distinguished from each other to the onlooker chiefly by their costumes: the high-class Egyptian lady, the woman of the middle class, the lower-class labouring woman of the city, the Fellaha or peasant woman, and the Bedouin who dwells in the desert.

Generally the Egyptian women from the age of fourteen to twenty-five are beautiful both in form and face. They have large black eyes with lashes very thick and long; these lashes have no curve and give a peculiar veiled expression to the eyes, making them appear darker and larger than they really are. Their noses are fine and delicate, their lips an exquisite bow shape. Their teeth are white, and their hands and feet, when not deformed by labour, dainty and delicate. The skin is of a light tan, but rarely does one see colour in the

A LAUNDRY WOMAN CARRYING CLOTHES ON HER HEAD.

cheeks. The hair is of a deep glossy black, rather coarse, but never with the true Egyptian is it woolly.

The lady of Egypt is rarely seen. One catches glimpses of her in carriages or motor-cars, the impression being of a woman dressed in black with a thin veil of white chiffon covering the lower part of her face. This veil, however, much to the disgust of the old-fashioned, conservative Egyptian, is becoming thinner each year ; in fact, it is often but an added attraction, making an ugly face pretty and adding an air of mystery and charm to a beautiful one.

In the home the Egyptian lady dresses much like a French woman of the same social standing ; even the silk hosiery and high-heeled French slippers are not wanting. This lady also partakes of the Europeanization of Egypt and reveals the influence of Western civilization which is so rapidly and thoroughly working a revolution in this ancient land, but the traditions and customs of her country are still powerful enough to require her to wear the black skirt of silk or satin and a cape-like piece of the same goods turned up at the waist-line for a head-covering, when she appears outside of the harem.

The Egyptian woman of the higher class is becoming Europeanized, as evidenced not only by the motor-cars and carriages with coachmen and chauffeurs in foreign liveries, and her dresses direct from Paris, but also by the furnishings of her home. Instead of the rich Eastern homes of the *Arabian Nights* with their lamps and rugs and elaborate hangings, we now see the drawing-room filled with French furniture, gilt chairs, instead of divans, rich Louis XV. tables in place of the low taborets; electric chandeliers glittering with cut glass have replaced the old elaborate lamps that are now rarely seen except in mosques, museums, and curio shops. The lady also now serves afternoon tea instead of Turkish coffee and the scented drinks that were the favourite beverages in the olden time, while, instead of "visiting" her friends for the day, she now makes fashionable calls.

She travels also, and as soon as the ship leaves the harbour of Alexandria or Port Said, the veil is laid aside and she is to all intents and purposes the cultured, well-educated lady of any country. It would be hard to tell her nationality, as generally her command of the French language is perfect, and she might be considered a woman of Turkey or Greece or even of France. But when again the ship

EGYPTIAN LADY IN STREET DRESS.

arrives in an Egyptian port she dons the dress of her people and is the veiled Egyptian lady.

Another type also rarely seen in the street, and who are the chief preservers of the ancient customs of Egypt, since they are brought less frequently into touch with European influences, are the women of the great middle class, the wives of the lawyers, doctors, teachers, small officials and professional men of all grades as well as the women belonging to the upper merchant class. Their homes have not been subjected to such a radical change as that seen among the Egyptian aristocracy, although it is evident that the only reason for this difference has been the lack of opportunity.

The middle-class woman, like her sister of the upper class, may be a good judge of what is consistent in the way of decoration of a purely Egyptian home, but when she tries to replace her native furnishings with those of France, the effect is baneful. Instead of the softened colouring of the Eastern carpets and hangings she is likely to substitute the gaudy dyes of Europe's worst manufactures; while she is inclined to mistake gilding, mirrors, and ornate work for cosmopolitanism and culture.

If one is fortunate enough to penetrate the

home of a conservative Egyptian untouched by Western ideas, one finds it a thing of beauty and a rest to jaded nerves and tired eyes, with its closely drawn blinds shutting out the fierce tropical light and heat, its court with the fountain sending up its cooling waters, flowers, the comfortable divans covered with soft-toned rugs, shaded lights, exquisite brass trays on which stand the tiny china cups in their small brass or silver holders, from which one drinks the coffee served by white-clad, quiet servants—it is all Eastern and gives the sense of repose and leisure.

The women of this great class dress, when outside of their homes, similarly to those in the highest social scale, but within the house they wear a galabeigh, a sort of glorified empire-gown hanging straight from the shoulder or gathered to a yoke, and having a long train behind. This garment is made of silk or satin, and often is elaborately trimmed. If custom restricts them to black while in the street, they exercise their individual taste in regard to colours within their apartments. I have seen a group of ladies with their pink, blue, and yellow galabeighs, looking like a flock of gaily plumaged birds.

Both the upper and middle class wear an im-

A CAIRO LADY IN STREET DRESS.

mense amount of jewellery, which lately has taken the shape of pins, ear-rings, and bracelets from the French shops on the Kaiser en Nil, instead of ornaments from the goldsmiths in the bazaars. The long pendant ear-rings covered with fine diamonds, and necklaces of coloured precious stones, are the ornaments now coveted, and quantity not quality is the chief desire of the woman whose husband's purse is large enough to bring her these tokens of his affection. She differs in this respect from the woman of China, who is also peering into the outside world, but who seems to understand that pearls and jade, not diamonds and rubies, are the proper setting for her Eastern beauty.

The third class one sees in the cities of Egypt is the woman of the lower walks of life, the wife of the workman, the small shop-keeper, the servant, and the craftsman. She is dressed in a galabeigh of black or coloured cotton, over which, when in the streets, she draws a piece of black material which entirely covers her body and is held in place beneath the left arm. Her face-veil is black or of cloth inset with pieces of open-work, and often, by the old-fashioned ladies, held down by coins sewed to its lower edges. A nose-piece of yellow

wood and gold or brass is sewed to the top of the veil, holding it in place, and is kept firm by a ribbon around the head beneath the shawl. This arrangement effectually conceals the face with the exception of the eyes, and these are difficult to discern, because of the disfiguring nose-piece.

This veil is of remote antiquity, but judging from the sculptures and paintings of the ancient Egyptians, it would seem to have been inaugurated since those early times. It was, however, used by nearly all women of Eastern races, and is spoken of in the Old Testament:

"Rebecca said to the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant said, It is my master. And she took her veil and covered herself." St. Paul also said, "Is it seemly that a woman pray to God unveiled?"

The wife of the poor manual labourer, as her richer sister, has her jewellery. Her ear-rings may be of gold or silver, and her necklace of glass beads or even of brass. Her bracelets and the anklets hanging over her bare feet are often of silver or the cheaper metals. Yet one is surprised often to see a poor woman with gold ear-rings or a necklace worth many piastres. It was the poor man's form of investment of his savings in

A WOMAN OF THE LABOURING CLASSES.

the olden time when there were no banks in which he could trust his hard-earned money. He bought jewellery, which in the case of gold is practically pure, and can be converted into money with little loss.

A lady in Cairo who employs a woman for rough work in her house, told me a story that illustrates the utilitarian use of jewellery, apart from its beauty. This working woman was extremely poor, having literally but one dress. One day she was given a little lamb, and she raised it until it became the desired weight, when it was taken to the near-by butcher. The money realized was spent, not for clothes nor for food, but for a pair of gold ear-rings. When remonstrated with in regard to the apparent foolishness of her purchase, she said, "I would wear out the clothes and eat the food, but these will last, and when we have no money we can always go to the pawn-shop." Her choice seemed justified because the ear-rings have made many a journey to the man who lends money.

The working-classes of Egypt are little in advance of the wolf that seems to be always following them, and it gives a sense of security to feel that they have at least one thing that will mean bread, if that voracious animal gets too close.

Another reason for the immense amount of jewellery seen on all classes of Egyptian women is the fact that if women are divorced they are entitled to their wearing apparel as well as any part of their dowry which may have been retained by their husbands at the time of betrothal. They may not be able to get the dower, but there can be no question of what they actually have upon their persons.

These reasons for the love of jewellery may be very practical, but these women mainly love jewellery because it is *jewellery*, and all Eastern women, Chinese, Indian, Turkish, and Egyptian, are fond of adorning themselves. As they rely much more upon personal beauty to retain the love of the husband than does the Western woman, they take advantage of all the arts to adorn that beauty, for there is a saying, "A woman without ornaments is like a field without water."

While travelling up the Nile one sees the small villages which seem to be a part of the soil, so neutral is their colour. The houses are made from sun-dried bricks, the only thing to make one really believe they are not a veritable part of the sands of the desert being the whitened cupola

FEAST DRESS OF THE LOWER-CLASS EGYPTIAN WOMAN.

of a mosque or the dome of the tomb of some saint or holy man.

Even the dress of the woman is dull and wretched looking. You see her as she comes down the narrow pathway leading to the river or canal, her water-jar balanced sideways upon her head, her blue or black galabeigh hanging in straight lines from her shoulders, her bare feet half covered with the heavy anklets. She has no face-veil, but on meeting you she draws an end of the long black head-covering across her mouth and peers at you curiously from above it. She has a beautiful carriage, and the gesture, superb and supple as she bends to the river and places the filled jar upon her head, cannot be equalled for grace. But her hands are roughened from toil, and she becomes old before her time. Her life is passed in heavy work, and in her simple home are few conveniences.

The house is only a couple of rooms opening upon a small yard, around which is built a wall of the same dun-coloured brick. Within this small enclosure live the family and the animals, the donkey, the camel, and the chickens. The kitchen consists of a bare dark room, with a few baskets or jars along the sides to contain the grain, a couple of stones on which is built the fire

to heat the food within the iron cooking-pot. There are no table, no chairs, and no beds; the earth serves for all three. At night a mat is spread upon the beaten ground, and the entire family curl upon it, wrapped in their clothes of the day. The warm sunshine and rainless days and nights make it possible for the Egyptian to live out of doors practically ten months of the year. This fact accounts for their healthfulness, despite their disregard of all sanitary laws.

Their food is simple. Wheaten bread is practically an unknown luxury, millet, maize, and dourha forming a very wholesome substitute. Meat is rarely eaten by the peasant except on great occasions, and then mutton is preferred, but buffalo and goats are also used, as are poultry and pigeons. Beans and lentils, onions and garlic, are the poor man's vegetables, while cucumbers and a large radish are eaten raw and without peeling as a fruit. Sugar-cane at the season of its growth is seen in the hands of old and young, while musk-melons and water-melons are a delight to the peasant. The women make a sweet from the dried and pounded dates, that is used especially at the time of feasts.

All the work of preparing this food falls upon the

AN EGYPTIAN WOMAN CARRYING WATER.

housewife. She must clean the maize and grind it in the mill, then make the bread, which is a most laborious process. In fact she has no idle life. She spins the wool and cotton for the clothing, often weaves the cloth, carries the water from the river, and gathers the mud and straw to make the round, flat cakes for fuel, which she stores upon the roof or within the courtyard. In the evening she or the children take the camels or the goats and the donkey to the fields and watch them while they eat their allotted portion of bersein or clover.

In moments stolen from household work the women weave baskets from the date-palm leaves or make the sleeping-mats from the reeds, which they themselves must gather. If there is space upon the roof or within the tiny courtyard they keep a few chickens in order to sell the eggs, and add a little to their limited income. The wives of the Fellaheen are true helpmates. At the time of harvest one sees them cutting the ripened grain, or carrying it in great bundles upon their heads to the store-houses within the village. It is a life of toil, with, what seems to Western eyes, little compensation.

In the desert one sees the most interesting type

of all, the Bedouin. She is generally a well-formed, tall, strong woman, dressed in the usual black or coloured galabeigh, with the addition of a multi-coloured sash wrapped many times around the waist. Over her head and hanging down her back is a veil or handkerchief, but she does not veil her face unless living in a village. In the life of a true Bedouin, that is a dweller in the tent, the veiling and seclusion of the women are not practised. But when they move to villages and live in houses they imitate their neighbours the Egyptians and seclude their women.

While the Bedouin does not dress herself in silk or satin, like the city-dweller, she makes up for this lack of richness in goods by her love for native jewellery. She wears gold necklaces with balls as big as hazel-nuts, and elaborate pendants hanging over her chest. Often she has rows upon rows of gold coins attached to chains, the entire body, from the waist up, being covered with the barbaric ornaments. In her ears she wears two great rings, one from the top of the ear and one from the lobe. In her left nostril is an ornament, and her arms are covered with bracelets. When she walks one can hear the tinkle of her anklets. This sound is so common that there is a Bedouin

WATER-CARRIERS: ONE WITH A NATIVE JAR, AND ONE WITH A STANDARD OIL TIN.

song which begins "The ringing of thine anklets has deprived me of my reason." This jewellery has not changed its shape or form with the passage of time. It is practically the same as worn by the women of Judea in the time of Isaiah:

"In that day the Lord will take away the beauty of their anklets and the cauls and crescents, the pendants, and the bracelets and the mufflers, the head tires and the ankle-chains; the sashes and the perfume boxes and the amulets, the rings and the nose jewels . . . and the turbans and the veils."

The tent Bedouin rarely leaves the camp. Her world is the low tent around the sides of which are folded the rugs and sleeping-mats and blankets which are the work of her hands and the exhibition of her riches. On the part of the tent where the family sit is spread a rug or mat, and in another part on the bare sand are the stones for the fire. Except for the jars or baskets and sacks to hold provisions and extra clothing, there is no furniture. The food is mainly mutton cooked in different ways, and served in a big bowl, around which the family sit, helping themselves from the common dish, using bread as plate and knife and fork. The desert-dweller cares little for vegetables, which fact is, perhaps, accounted for by his inability

to raise them in the sands that surround his home.

The Bedouin and many of the lower-class Egyptian women tattoo their faces with three or four dark-blue lines extending from the lower lip over the chin to the neck. Also fancy figures are tattooed on the hands, and the wrists are often marked with bracelets in blue ink. Henna is used to stain the hair, giving it a rich dark-red, that when not used too abundantly is very pretty in the jet-black of the natural colour. Grey hair is considered very ugly and is always dyed.

It is only in the desert and the country that one sees the henna-stained hands and feet, as it is not considered fashionable by city people. The inside of the hands and feet is coloured a deep orange, and the nails of both fingers and toes are touched with the dye, often the fingers showing the stain to the first or second joint, giving a most uncleanly appearance according to Western standards.

Practically all Eastern women wear a covering for the hair both in and out of the house. It is generally a large silk handkerchief or veil of black with a coloured border, but which, at time of festivity, is changed for one elaborately embroidered or sewn with sequins. It is a disgrace to allow

A WOMAN OF THE DESERT.

the head to be unveiled, the expression "She is a woman without a veil for her hair" is equivalent to saying "She is without shame."

The hair, which hardly shows at all, is braided in two braids hanging down the back, rather like that worn by the school-girls of our country, except that gold coins are braided into the ends, and clink and glisten from under the veil as the wearer moves her head. At present the Bedouin who wishes to be especially progressive makes only one braid, which is a decided change from the fashion of a few years ago, when the hair was parted into fourteen sections, each one tightly braided and woven with gold coins.

The Bedouin woman has much more liberty than the Egyptian woman. She does not impress one as being downtrodden or held in any manner of subjection. She shares in the life of the entire camp, taking a keen and intelligent interest in all that affects her tribe. Because of the Bedouin customs of entertaining the traveller, who may be passing from one part of the desert to another, she gathers the gossip from all parts of the country. At each camp the chief of the tribe has a rest-house where any Bedouin may stop, stable his horse, and receive food so long as he wishes. The

traveller may be from Tripoli and bring the latest news of the war or from the Southern Sahara.

At the castle of a chief where I visited there were often as many as thirty strangers within the travellers' courtyard, and I soon learned to consider them far more advanced than their Egyptian neighbour who stays within his village. The blood of the Bedouin is the wanderer's blood. He is a true descendant of Ishmael in that he claims the whole great desert for his home.

AN EGYPTIAN GIRL CARRYING WATER.

CHAPTER VI

EGYPTIAN WOMEN AT SCHOOL

A BRITISH statesman said, "We must concentrate our attention upon the mothers of Egypt, for what the mothers are the children will become, and what the children are the men become." Therefore in the mothers is found the secret of the strength of a nation, and the first great need of Egypt touches the domestic circle, the home of the child, the wife, and the mother. In the Ministry of Public Works in Cairo recently a Moslem of the higher official class was heard to say that his mother had never stepped outside of her house, not even to cross the street. It has not been uncommon even now in certain parts of Egypt for the labouring man to lock up his wife and children before going to his work in the morning, and the mud hut is made a prison-house until his return at night. Upon being asked what she did all day, a Mohammedan woman of

the better class replied, "I sit on that couch for a time, and when I get tired I cross over and sit on that one."

In the light of such conditions as these one can better understand the reports of the last census which state that but two in a thousand Egyptian women can read and write, and it is useless to state that the first and greatest need of Egypt is the education of the women. As it is now, not being able to read, not knowing what is going on in the outside world, except as it filters through the gossip of servants and visitors equally as ignorant, the women and children live in a world apart, having few interests outside the realm of petty gossip and intrigue. These conditions are bound to foster in the mind of Egyptian childhood the inferiority of womanhood, at the same time stultifying the youthful mind and growth by associations that have little if any value in the way of early education. If it is true that the social and personal conceptions of a child's home world are the permanent influences not to be shaken off in after life, the untoward early surroundings are among the first changes to be wrought in the education of the New Egypt.

Beginnings have been made, and some of them

GIRLS' COLLEGE, CAIRO.

very propitiously. "It is not coming with a rush yet," said the principal of a training college for girls in Cairo, but for that matter what has ever come in a rush in any Oriental land? Last year instruction was given to 22,002 girls in 2,867 kuttabs (small village schools), while 13 of the Government kuttabs have been specially set apart for women students and now have an attendance of 2,030 girls, with 42 trained women teachers. In one of these schools for teachers which I visited there were 138 applications for 13 vacancies.

Schools for girls are also being founded by native initiative through the inspiration of the example of the Government institutions. A large institution for the training of women is just now being opened in Alexandria by the Egyptian Government, and the appurtenances for modern education compare favourably with those of Western schools. The missionary institutions for girls conducted by the American Mission are among the most flourishing and efficient of the girls' schools of Egypt. Although the majority of these students are from Coptic families, there is a growing tendency for Moslem parents to send their daughters to the missionary institutions, where at present about 30 per cent. are of the Mohammedan faith. Twenty

years ago it was almost impossible to find a Moslem girl in a Christian school.

The English Government struck a note of reform, not educational only, but social and national as well, when in 1901 it began sending Egyptian girls to Europe to be trained as teachers. The difficulties confronting the Ministry of Education were many and varied. The girl's father had first to be dealt with and convinced that no attempt would be made to destroy the girl's religious convictions. He was not at all certain of the wisdom of this very revolutionary concession in allowing his daughter to leave home before her marriage. When the girl returned to Egypt and secured a self-supporting position as teacher, and when the father beheld in his daughter not a perverted Moslem but a more devoted member of the traditional faith, a long step was taken in the education of women.

One of these fathers expressed his satisfaction with the wise and impartial attitude of the English Government when he said to Dr. Dunlop, who asked him concerning the results of European education upon his daughter, " You have not only trained her mind, but you have trained her heart. She speaks more kindly to her mother in the home, she is more thoughtful ; she is a better Moslem girl."

It is to the great credit of Egyptian women that of the entire number of girls who have been sent to Europe in their teens to be educated, suddenly deprived of the close home restrictions and guardianship, which is much more than the supervision to which the Western girl is subjected, at the same time subjected to many temptations in a foreign land, no breath of scandal has attached to any of them.

Teachers tell me that one of the real battles that has to be fought and conquered is the intense conceit of the girl student. It cannot be wondered at when one considers that she takes the varied information she learns within the schoolroom, her knowledge of the sciences, of the world, and books to a home where perhaps she is the only member of the family who can read the evening paper. When she sees the father and mother and the grandmother gather around her and listen with eagerness and astonishment to her marvellous tales, shaking their heads and perhaps murmuring, "Is it possible that this is my daughter?" one can readily see why it is necessary for the teachers to combat constantly this overweening pride.

In addition to the three R's that are taught in all schools, the missionary and training schools

make a speciality of household economy. The work of the house is done by the pupils, each taking their week's or month's turn at a certain kind of housework. In one training school I visited, I saw a squad of pupils putting up preserves, another making cakes. The rooms and dormitories are kept spotless by the pupils themselves, and in the sewing classes they are taught to make their simple dresses, from the drafting to the last stitch of embroidery.

The religious education is not omitted in the Government schools. While visiting one I went into a room where there were perhaps fifty little girls of about eleven to twelve years of age all crooning in a sing-song voice verses from the Koran. The teacher for this branch of instruction was an old blind woman who knew the Koran by heart, and she commenced a surah or chapter and allowed the children to finish it, listening carefully to the well-known words, keeping time with a motion of her head, stopping suddenly at an unusual word which meant to her a mistake.

I asked the Sheikh in charge if the children were taught the prayers. He asked me if I would like to hear the prayers, and of course I assented instantly. He called five little girls to an inner room

and asked them to say the morning prayer, which they did, bowing, and kneeling and touching their heads to the floor, all the many acts of devotion that one sees being performed by the men of Egypt in mosque, shop, street corner, or field, but rarely by the women.

There is every indication that this educational reform is sweeping rapidly through the entire nation. One cannot pass along the streets of Cairo without being amazed at the number of schools of all kinds, French, English, and Italian, that are established for girls. Egypt seems to be a haven for the private-school teacher, and I am afraid that many of these schools are not of the first quality as regards their teachers, because as yet the Egyptian is no very great judge of the kind of education he seeks, nor the means to be employed to obtain it. But it all tends to show the trend of thought, and is proving that education is abroad in the land.

The men are desiring educated wives and daughters. A boy who has had even a simple education does not care for the old-time wife of the harem, whose little round of talk and gossip soon tires him. I asked a young man who was returning to the country to marry after passing several years in Cairo, where he was studying in the

school of medicine, what kind of a wife he was choosing. He said, "If it were of my choice, I would ask for a wife from some school here, but my mother is choosing her for me, and she has no education at all. I will try to get her into a school or have teachers for her after we are married, if my mother will permit it."

Miss Florence Davson, in the *Egyptian Daily Post*, gives a comprehensive description of female education in Egypt, as it existed at the time when she wrote.

"The recent Congress held on Education in London naturally aroused the interest of all dwellers in Egypt in the question of education for the Egyptians, and especially of that for the education of Egyptian women. There are now several hundred girls and young women in Egypt undergoing a carefully directed course of study that varies according to their degree and to the particular school in which they are placed. The progress made in the last twelve years has been very great, and it must be remembered that the work is one of much difficulty and delicacy. Those who, from lack of knowledge, cannot understand the labour entailed are too often ready to offer criticism. Most difficult to please, however, are those devoted teachers

INTERIOR OF A MOSQUE, EL AZHAR (UNIVERSITY), CAIRO

of high attainments, who, in their anxiety to bring their pupils to a higher standard, expect to arrive at a perfect result.

" It is not too much to say that twelve years ago there was hardly an Egyptian lady who could read. This would not have been of so much importance had she possessed domestic accomplishments and known how to keep house, to direct the cooking, the laundry, and to work cleverly with her hands. But to be a capable housewife was not within the scope of her ambition or capabilities. . . . In the case of a lady all actual work was carried out by servants. The long hours of harem solitude and seclusion hung heavily ; and idleness brings mischief at its heels, and succeeding empty days with their slight complement of tittle-tattle, lazily given orders, and attention to finery, could but result in deterioration, bodily and mental. What could a girl or woman do who had neither studies nor book to read, needlework nor liberty to take exercise ?

" She could eat sweets, she could visit her friends, she kept the house after the slack, disorderly fashion of her mother and grandmother, she visited and gossiped with her woman friends. She listened to interminable romances from the lips of slaves, tales which too often stimulated the imagination

in the worst manner, and possibly paved the way to deceit and intrigue. Her standing in the eyes of men was low and devoid of respect. Her power, if any, was the material influence gained by beauty or the underhand craft resulting from adroit flatterers.

"When the idea of educating women was first brought before the Egyptians, they looked on the project with doubt and distrust. Education would naturally mean liberty. The girl would learn to read, and their books would tell them of the customs of the women of other countries. They would be discontented with their seclusion and break their bonds. Liberty would mean free intercourse with the other sex. That their daughters should talk and walk with men like the women of other lands was a thing not to be thought of.

"A course which ran counter to deeply rooted prejudices of fathers and brothers was necessarily very difficult to put in hand. And it must not be forgotten that there is certain wisdom in many national habits; they have not grown rapidly or slightly. To a great extent they are often a safeguard against grave national faults. The fathers of Egypt who distrusted the educational project were justified in fearing too much liberty for their daughters. That, if it comes, must come gradually.

A SHEIKH.

And with it too there must be a change in the young men of the land. There was much, however, that the girls could be taught for their mental, moral, and physical benefit, even if the harem existence were to continue interminably unbroken.

" Schools were opened in spite of the difficulties. Some pupils were boarders, others came by the day. A course of study was mapped out, including history, geography, arithmetic, geometry, brushwork, and needlework. The girls took kindly to school life, which offered a delightful change after the monotony of home. The regular existence and constant work soon showed its good effect on both mind and body. Naturally matters did not progress as in an English school, where the girls have been compelled to learn for generations. But the intelligent, contented girls who had learned to think, to judge, to act reasonably soon showed that the experiment was a success.

" Implicit obedience to those above them is inculcated at all the schools, for no Egyptian girl can have a happy home-life unless she is prepared to give perfect submission to her husband or father. Perhaps as time goes on and the people of Egypt appreciate the mental development of their womenfolk, they will allow them to exercise their judgment, but submit to their husbands. Even so, the

educated girl is now able to take up many useful household affairs, to beautify her rooms with exquisite work, to attend to the care of her health and that of her dependents. This is a great advance from the days when outside finery was the only thing appreciated."

Still, as Miss Davson says, it is hard to combat the ignorance and love of custom of the old-time conservative Egyptian, but the next generation of Egyptian women, the bright-faced girls one sees in the schoolroom to-day, will have a great influence upon the life and thought of the Egypt of to-morrow. The old-time picture of the Oriental woman spending her hours upon divans, eating sweetmeats and indulging in petty and degrading gossip with women as ignorant as herself, will be changed. The new woman of Egypt will be a companion rather than a slave or toy of her husband. Marriage will advance from the stage of a paltry trade in bodies to something like real union, involving respect towards the woman by both fathers and sons, while in a new pride of relationship the woman herself will be discovered.

Within a few years it will be a brave man who would dare to speak of his wife as did a Moslem once when complimented about the cure of the eyes of

his wife, who had been successfully operated upon for cataract. He said, in regard to the trouble and expense he had taken, "It is a worthy action that she should be enabled to look upon her children. It counts with God. To see a blind dog who cannot look upon her puppies is a painful sight. How much more a human being! For after all, *a woman is a human being.*"

CHAPTER VII

THE EGYPTIAN HAREM

A MOSLEM home is divided into two distinct apartments, the Selam-lik or men's apartments, and the Harem-lik, the rooms devoted exclusively to the women and children. All Egyptian women of respectability are confined strictly within their quarters, and the higher the social standing, the more strict is the seclusion of the women. This seclusion was unknown in the first Islamic era, the time when Islam ran in its natural course and the customs of the Arabs were at their purest, not yet mixed with those of the natives of the countries invaded later.

From the beginning of the "Omayah" dynasty, when the Empire began to spread and when Arabs mixed with the peoples of other countries by commerce and marriage, they added the customs of the conquered countries to their own. One of these was the seclusion of the women, one which did

NATIVE WOMEN SELLING FRUIT.

not mean imprisonment. It arose out of the old-time border warfare, when the different tribes were continually making raids against each other. When one of these warring parties came down upon the village of its enemies, the first thing they did was to carry off the women, children, and cattle. The only means of protection being to put the helpless, non-fighting population in the inner rooms of the houses where they could be defended, it naturally happened that the higher the rank of the family the more isolated were its females.

Seclusion, thus beginning gradually, was retained and became a mark of caste, of superiority from a social standpoint, and the conquering Arabs adopted it. An Armenian scholar, speaking of the seclusion of all Eastern women, said that the European woman owed her freedom to the Germans who swept down over Europe with their conquering armies and left in their wake their customs of woman's equality with man.

In Egypt one sees only the working-class woman in the street; even the higher labouring classes are not seen in public. These women who wander about unveiled are neither envied by the secluded, nor are they themselves satisfied with their freedom, believing that it is only poverty and need that

compel them to leave the seclusion of their homes. If by chance they become rich they immediately seclude themselves and are proud of this mark of their higher social position.

The aristocracy can be seen driving in the afternoon within closed broughams, but even that is a new departure. However, the most progressive official would hardly dare to drive up the fashionable promenade with his wife seated beside him. It is also not common to see a lady of standing shopping in the bazaars. The new generation are trying to break down this extreme seclusion, but every step forward is barred by some ancient ordinance, claiming divine origin or the supreme authority of tradition. The older generation cannot understand this desire of new feminine Egypt to come into the outside world. Many of them, these conservative Egyptian ladies, who seem almost myths so little is known about them, never leave their homes after coming to them as brides. One old lady of my acquaintance made the boast that she had not crossed the threshold of her house for forty years.

Another woman who lives in busy Cairo practically never leaves her house except to make rare visits to her daughter, although her husband is most advanced, takes yearly trips to Europe, and has

repeatedly begged her to accompany him; she absolutely refuses the invitation. She says, "I will leave that to my daughter, who asks nothing better than the chance to show her pretty face. But to me it would mean shame and a breach of all that I have been taught is womanly and modest, to go unveiled before strange men. A man has never seen me except my husband since I was a tiny girl."

It is this older, conservative woman who makes rigid the seclusion of the harem. It is she who sets the standard of liberty enjoyed by her daughters-in-law, and she often makes the doors of the harem a prison gateway.

Seclusion has been bred for centuries in the heart, habits, and life of the Egyptian woman, and she feels it no hardship. She believes it the desire of her husband to protect her, and if allowed unusual liberty would think herself unloved and neglected. The highest term that can be applied to a husband's love for his wife is "He will not even permit the sun to look upon her."

Whether it is because of her belief that her value rises in proportion to her seclusion I do not know, but it is the women who are frequently more conservative than the men in this respect. I know a Sheikh who lived many years in England with his

family, and while there his wife kept the harem as strictly as she would in Egypt. She would not even go for a carriage drive as the veil attracted attention, and she could not bring herself to go without the covering for her face. She said to me, "I tried it once, and I felt as you would if you went along the street without a skirt. I felt immodest."

While calling upon this family I dressed in Egyptian costume and went into the courtyard, where my husband took my picture. I then asked them to have their pictures taken. They thought I meant that my husband would act as photographer, and they were horrified. One young woman flushed as rosy red as if an insulting proposal had been made to her, but when I explained that I would take it myself and that my husband would remain in the selam-lik, they were delighted and hurried off to their rooms to put on their pretty gowns. They came arrayed as Solomon in all his glory. The gowns were practically all alike in regard to fashion, a form of empire gown, but the goods were magnificent: stiff brocades with great figures in gold or silver; gorgeous silks and satins that one only sees in pictures, but never imagines as dresses. They were all very pretty women, and these gorgeous colours that would seem out of place

on the faded foreign lady only accentuated their dark beauty.

In regard to the seclusion and the veiling of the women, the Koran has prescribed very exact laws. After a woman has passed the age of childhood she may never allow a man to look at her except the immediate relatives of her family, such as brother, father, or uncle. All the male members of her husband's family are forbidden to look upon her. The women whom a man may see unveiled are restricted to those he may not marry on account of their being within a certain relationship proximity, as mother, sister, aunt, foster-mother, or slaves.

Even the men servants are barred from seeing the inmates of the harem. All orders to the male domestics are given through women servants, if the husband does not attend to that part of the household himself. A woman told me she had employed a cook for fourteen years and he had never seen her. If Potiphar's wife had been a modern Egyptian woman, the story of the temptation of Joseph would never have been told, as he would never have had the opportunity of entering the apartments of his mistress.

The Eastern idea of the sacredness of the women's

quarter is carried to such an extent that entrance into the tombs of certain females is denied to men —for instance the tombs of the Prophet's wives and other women of his family in El Medina, into which women are admitted, but from which men are barred. It is even carried to the grave, as men and women are never buried in the same vault unless separated by a wall.

Yet Egyptian women do not consider themselves prisoners, nor are they treated as such. They are at liberty to pay visits to their women friends, and they are constantly receiving visits from their relatives and the wives of their husband's friends and associates. The visits are most joyous, often gayer than they would be in the restricted presence of men.

A woman who goes to see her neighbour does not make an afternoon call, but she goes for the day or the afternoon. She removes the harborah which takes the place of hat and wrap, quite likely slips off the black street skirt and stands arrayed in a gorgeous house dress. Then they chat and gossip and drink cooling drinks and small cups of black coffee in which a bit of ambergris or rose water has been dropped, eat sweets, talk dress and children, sit around the large brass tray on which dinner is

AN ARAB FAMILY AT DINNER.

served, and eat the deliciously cooked mutton or chicken, and the innumerable dishes of sweets and vegetables.

They do not hurry over their meals, as, judging from appearances, they are epicurean; indeed, to eat and to drink seems to be the most enjoyable pastime of all Egyptians. It has its effect, as the sedentary life, combined with the enormous amount of liquid and sweetened foods, tends to make the Egyptian woman of the harem enormously stout after she has passed the first flush of youth. This is not a trial to her as it might be to her Western sister, as thin women are not considered beautiful, and instead of indulging in medicines and exercise to reduce the over-abundant flesh, the Egyptian woman buys drugs for the opposite purpose.

I visited one time at the country estate of an Egyptian. I lived in the harem while my husband remained in the men's quarters. The seclusion was very strict, my hostess never having seen her brother-in-law, who lived in the same house, except as he passed along the road and she saw him from the window. We were calling on his wife, and I was shown a picture of her husband. While I was regarding it my hostess looked at it as curiously as one would look at the picture of a stranger. I

said, "But surely you do not have to study the picture of your husband's brother to become acquainted with his features?" She said, "I have no idea what he looks like any more than you have. The road is so far away from my window that I would have to study him with an opera glass, and even you will admit that that would be more than curiosity."

Her father-in-law called once a year, and she entered the room closely veiled and wished him the joys of the coming year, and without raising her eyes to his face left the room. Yet she said that the harem was not observed as strictly on their country estate as in their town house. She was allowed to have the men servants around her as they were all Soudanese, old retainers on the estate, their fathers and fathers' fathers having been in the same position.

The women of the harem are much more familiar with the servants than we of Western countries. The maids come in and out of the room freely, never knocking, and they take part in the conversation. This familiarity to servants is found in all Eastern countries where the woman lives a restricted life. This may arise from the loneliness of the women's lives who are often confined to

the people within their apartments for amusement and interest. In China the personal attendant of the lady is much more than maid, she is friend and adviser as well. The guests in an Egyptian household talk quite freely with the servants who wait upon them, and the servants seem to have no feeling that they are of a lower scale. It may come in part from the teaching of Mohammed, who said that all, poor and rich alike, who called upon the name of Allah and believed that Mohammed was his apostle, were brothers. He levelled all class distinctions.

While in the country my hostess and I went out a great deal visiting her husband's relatives, but always accompanied by a servant, who went ahead to see that no masculinity was abroad. While we were in a house, the owner never came near the women's apartments. One day we were crossing the courtyard in front of the selam-lik, thinking all the men had gone for a ride; as we were in front of the door it opened and my husband came out. Of course he immediately turned and pretended he had not seen his Egyptian hostess. She flushed and looked around in a very embarrassed manner to see if any one had noted the dreadful breach of modesty. I think the first thought was, "I hope my husband did not see me!"

There is a story told in one of the romances of Egypt that shows to what an extent the idea of the veiling of the women is carried. Once upon a time a woman was married to a man whom she disliked intensely, and she planned his death, and all would have been carried out according to her wishes if her plans had not been overheard by a relative, who surrounded the garden where the deed was to be committed and caught the woman and her assistant practically in the act. It was plain to the family that she had attempted the life of her husband, but he still loved her and would not agree to her death, until it was shown him that at least twelve persons had seen her unveiled, therefore it was plainly to be seen there was no other alternative for her except death.

This fear of men seeing them was exemplified strongly to me while visiting at this country place. We went to call on some of the numerous relatives of the husband of my hostess about an eighth of a mile from her home. All the women of the different households came in and we had a most charming visit. After fruit and coffee were served, I was rather at a loss for a subject of conversation, so spoke of the jewellery with which they were all literally covered: great heavy chains and

necklaces of gold coins and balls of gold, all most fitting to their style of beauty. They insisted on arraying me in their finery, and when I had the chains around my neck and the bracelets on my arms, they decided the only proper thing to do was for me to show myself to my husband. All the women—there must have been ten or twelve of them—started to escort us to our boat, but at a turn of the path leading to the canal a servant appeared and announced that the husband of my hostess was coming to return with us.

What a scattering of women! They seized their babies and simply flew for the house. A couple were in the pathway up which the man was coming and they could not get away, so they sat down suddenly, their backs to the path, their faces against the wall, and an old Soudanese servant pulled her shawl from around her and covered them with it. The man marched by them with a slightly contemptuous "La-la," paying no attention to them, nor did he turn and try to get away from them. He plainly showed that he considered it their business to get away from him, not his to flee from them.

It all seemed ridiculous to me, as this man was related to nearly all of them, but it was inbred in these women. It was not affectation at all, they

were shocked and frightened. The sister-in-law, who lived in the same house, seriously considered the propriety of returning with us on the same boat, but it was finally decided that she might go as she was older than the man. She sat in the farther corner of the boat with her face closely covered, and never spoke, nor looked in our direction. When the house was reached she silently went into her apartments without even a "Good night!"

It seemed a foolish custom to us, this segregation of the women. Our visit could have been so much more enjoyable if the four of us could have been together and enjoyed the drives and the strolls in the garden. One evening the wife and I dined on a boat on the canal, the moon shining through the palm-trees outlined against the wonderful sky of Egypt. We dined alone, she dressed in a most elaborate dress and with all her jewels, and our husbands dined in the selam-lik. It only needed a little masculine society to make it quite ideal, at least for a Western woman.

It seems to be a man's world entirely. A woman while at home is under the authority of her father, or, if he is dead, her eldest brother. When she marries she belongs to her husband body and soul.

He has supreme control of his harem. Neither law nor public opinion can touch him there. If some one calls on him for either social or business reasons, the servant's announcement that the master is in the harem is sufficient to cause him to leave or to sit patiently until it is the pleasure of his host to appear. He would never think of sending for him. Another thing he would never do—that is, ask after any woman within the harem of another man. That would be an unpardonable breach of etiquette.

I noticed one thing that the harem life does to the woman. She dresses for her husband, she lives entirely for him. She puts on elaborate gowns and jewels, knowing no one will see her but her husband. She flirts with him and talks to him, and waits upon him, and is always " nice," as her happiness depends entirely upon his kindness to her ; there are no little scenes, no poutings, no bickerings or fault-findings. From the moment her husband enters the door of the harem, a change comes over the woman, and her whole thought and attention are given to him. She evidently realizes the lightness of the marriage tie, that she might be divorced, or, what is worse, another woman might be " put over " her, as they say. She makes

it her business to try to keep his love by every little art known to women.

Yet in this world where the male reigns supreme, it seems to be the woman who is the preserver of the harem. Perhaps it is because the women of all classes and countries suffer from lack of facility in adapting themselves to new conditions. She is often as fixed as a star in its orbit. It is she and not so much the man of Egypt who seems to stand an immovable mountain in the path of freedom for women. In this course she is only following her nature. An instinct more powerful than logic seems to tell her that she must preserve the thing she knows, the centre for which she is responsible, the place where the child is born and reared, where her mate retreats when he leaves the outside world. She does not reason. Change she fears. She sees in the new ideas that her daughter brings from school only disturbers of her life's ideals.

Yet the new thoughts are gathering about her retreat, beating at her doors, creeping in at the closely shuttered windows, even winning her husband and her children from her arms. The enclosing walls and the jealously guarded doors of the harem are becoming impotent. While she stands an implacable foe of progress, a guardian of

what to her seems womanhood and modesty, the Egyptian world is moving on, feeling the impulse of a larger life, broadening its outlook and clothing itself in new expressions. But the older conservative woman of Egypt feels that she cannot keep up with the newer generation, and it is quite understood that, seeing herself left behind with her dead gods, she should cry out against the change, which is slowly but surely coming to Egyptian women with the advent of education and knowledge of the outside world.

CHAPTER VIII

MARRIAGE

"WHAT is the predominate desire of the woman of Egypt?" was the question I presented to an educated Egyptian woman. "The predominate desire of an Egyptian woman," she said, "is marriage." After studying the question from different angles, I should be inclined to add to this central objective that of being the mother of sons, since in Egypt, as in all Oriental countries, a woman is without honour until she bears sons to her lord.

In visiting the girls' schools of Egypt I asked repeatedly, "Are these girls being trained for a profession?" The answer invariably was, "No, they will marry!" Indeed, it is certain disgrace for an Egyptian woman to look forward to a means of support other than that attendant upon marriage.

The Minister of Education told me it is impossible

to keep native women teachers for more than two or three years after their graduation; and this in spite of the fact that they receive exceptionally good salaries, are provided with comfortable homes within the school buildings, and possess much greater freedom than they ever could attain within the walls of the harem. But here again the pressure of traditional custom prevails, and it is only a question of time, when the women, however efficient they may have become in earning their livelihood, will exchange the comfort and liberty of the independent life for the unknown and precarious chance for happiness as the wife of a Moslem.

The woman's life in this country begins with her betrothal. Previously she is considered a child. She passes abruptly from childhood to womanhood, deprived of delightful girlhood years with all their gifts of camaraderie with her brother and his friends, school days, and the joyous care-free days that are the heritage of the girl in Western lands. Between the ages of ten and fifteen years the Egyptian girl is betrothed, after which she is confined strictly within the harem, never allowed out except upon rare occasions, and then closely veiled and accompanied by an older woman.

Child marriages continue among the lower classes.

and it is a great evil, but not carried to such an extent as it is in India. It is not unusual to find child wives of ten years of age, but thirteen to fifteen is the average age for marriage now, while the upper classes of society are waiting still longer before the betrothal of their daughters. The Khedive has set the example for later marriages in the recent betrothal of his daughter, who is eighteen years old. That it will be years before this custom of later marriages so vital to the home life of the Egyptians will be general in the smaller towns, was proved to me as I visited certain towns in the Upper Nile country.

As I was calling at an Egyptian home in Assiut one day, a small girl came running into the room, then, seeing strangers, shyly departed. I said to my hostess, " Is that your little girl ? " She said, " Oh, no, that is my daughter-in-law." I said, " Is she not very young ? " She replied in a matter-of-fact way, " No, she is past ten." I asked the age of the husband, and was told that he was nineteen. I said nothing more, as I saw the circumstance did not appear to her unusual.

As girlhood is absent in Egypt, so likewise is courtship. The Oriental theory is that love comes after marriage, and that it can be kept from prema-

A STREET IN CAIRO, WITH MOUSHRABEAHS IN FRONT OF THE UPPER WINDOWS.

ture development by the complete separation of the sexes. Betrothal is arranged by the parents or some relative or friends. Modern Egyptians are still following the example set by Abraham, who sent a messenger to his country to seek a wife for his son Isaac. Indeed, it is considered a decided breach of etiquette for either of the interested pair to see each other previous to marriage. It is allowable, however, for the prospective bride to see a photograph of her future husband and to hear exaggerated accounts of him from the matchmaker or the contracting parents.

But in Egypt, as in Western lands, girls will be girls, and woman's curiosity is proverbial, and not even closely shuttered windows are sufficient barriers to preclude shy glimpses of her coming lord and master. One Egyptian woman told me how she sat for hours behind the moushrabeah overlooking the street along which she was told her fiancé would walk, risking the reprimand she knew she would receive if her conservative mother should discover her thus trampling in the dust the precious jewel of maidenly modesty.

After the betrothal, however, the girl issues into a new realm of importance, and gifts are the order of the hour. Fiancés send presents to their

brides-to-be, varying in costliness according to the material circumstances of the man. No prescribed rule governs the presentation of these gifts, the kinds and number of which vary according to different localities. In the city of Cairo, for example, subsequent to the betrothal, the fiancé first sends a piece of jewellery and certain silk materials for dresses, frequently adding handkerchiefs, stockings, shoes, etc. After a certain time has elapsed he follows his first gift by sending to his betrothed one or two donkey-carts filled with baskets of fruit and sweets. At a still later date the fiancé demonstrates his generosity by sending to his prospective bride a cart loaded with farm produce, including hens, turkeys, geese, and butter, often varying the selection of eatables by transferring to his loved one an enormous basket of fish.

Upon witnessing the arrival of carts loaded with such practical and eatable produce, one could almost imagine that he was in the land of the pristine donation party, and one sees in imagination the grateful clergyman and his family at the doorway welcoming with joy unspeakable the indispensable parochial manna. But the joys of these old-time parsons never exceeded those

of the Egyptian girl who, with fluttering heart, sees such cartloads of bulky evidences of affection arriving at her father's door, and knows that every closely shuttered window is hiding a face, and that every eye has counted carefully both the quantity and quality of these pre-nuptial tokens.

The woman in turn presents her betrothed upon her wedding-night with such marks of affection as are represented by a gold cigarette-box or a fine piece of masculine jewellery. She also gives him, against the time of need, one or more sleeping-suits, a night head-dress resembling very much the small cap that old gentlemen in Western lands, *sans* "hair," have with them to protect their heads from draughts, and also a pair of slippers of silk or velvet. Certain wealthy brides often give linen underclothing and frequently an elaborate outer costume.

The luxuriousness of this exchange of gifts among the people of wealth is often most lavish. One Egyptian woman of my acquaintance numbered among her betrothal presents a rich dressing-table with silk hangings and toilet-set of ivory, two elaborate silk and velvet dresses, innumerable silk stockings, a fan of mother-of-pearl, satin slippers, and an unlimited quantity of perfumes.

All this was in addition to the gifts which came in the carts filled with sweets and fruits. On her wedding-night her gift from her husband consisted of a pearl and diamond necklace, while on the next day he brought her a gold hand-bag inset with jewels.

The custom is very generally followed by the bridegroom, especially if his financial ability permits, to give the bride on the wedding-night a piece of jewellery as he removes the veil and sees for the first time his wife's face.

There is always a certain amount of money presented to the father of the bride by the husband, which in the case of the very poor signifies that the parents sell the bride to the highest bidder. The Fellaheen and the Bedouin omit the betrothal presents, simply sending the amount of money agreed upon beforehand. The Bedouin fiancée, that is the tent Bedouin, who has not been influenced by European or city customs, keeps a certain portion of the marriage money to buy clothes, a Persian rug, and a blanket. The Bedouins also, if they follow their old tribal laws, must send a certain number of sheep and calves to be killed on the day of the betrothal, the meat that is not eaten by the invited guests being given to the poor and the servants.

Among the better class of Egyptians a marriage contract is drawn, and if there is a question of the bride bringing money to her husband, the contract may stipulate its use, a certain amount to be returned to her if divorced, etc. If the wife is a member of an influential family, she may make her own terms, and the power of her family behind her enables her to enforce the terms of the contract.

If the wife should find herself in trouble and obliged to stand alone against her husband, she generally fights a losing battle as her grievances are laid before the Kadi, who will often delay his decision for years, if he does not decide in favour of the husband. The balances of justice for the undefended Egyptian woman are not weighted in her favour. In this, as in innumerable other instances in Oriental lands, the superiority of the man is conceded by law. However, Moslem law, as laid down in the Koran, prescribes that whatever property the wife receives from her husband, parent, or other person, is entirely at her own disposal and not subject to any claim of her husband's creditors.

All Egyptians, the poor Fellaheen as well as the rich merchant type, have certain festivities con-

nected with a marriage, although no ceremonies of any kind are necessary to legalize a marriage. The mere sentence, "I give myself to thee!" uttered by a woman renders her the legal wife of her husband. In the streets of Cairo a familiar sight to all Western travellers is the wedding procession, the band leading the march, clowns dancing gaily ahead, dozens of singers often making merry as they march and sing, while the bride's carriage, gaily decorated with bright coloured shawls and flowers and followed by other vehicles containing the nuptial party, is the centre of attraction.

The marriage festivities of the rich are even more imposing, and last from three to seven days. The street processions are more elaborate, and the groom often sets up a great tent hung with carpets and embroideries where he entertains his friends with music, singing-girls, and theatrical entertainments, especially when his home is not large enough for such pretentious celebrations. The bride, in turn, gives feasts to her friends, each day being marked by its special festivity, culminating on the eve when the bride is taken to her new home.

The wedding festivities of one of my Egyptian women friends lasted for three days and cost her

father a huge sum of money. But she said to me confidentially, "I was so frightened that I could not hear the singers nor see the dancers because of my tears. My mother scolded me and said, 'Fatima, you will be so ugly with your swollen eyes that he will not even take you away from your father's house.'" She laughed in her jolly way and said, "You know that did not add to my composure." It is surely a trying moment for both bride and groom when the veil is raised and the frightened young wife tremblingly wonders whether she finds favour in the sight of her liege lord.

This marriage rite is called the "lifting of the veil," and is practised by all Eastern races. The Chinese groom sees the face of his bride for the first time as he lifts her veil on the marriage day, and this primitive custom has its survival in the West in the bridegroom lifting the veil of his bride at the conclusion of the marriage and giving her a husband's kiss.

But such external descriptions of the marriage of the Egyptian woman are inadequate to describe or to interpret the meaning of this important ceremonial. Whatever marriage may mean behind the exclusive walls of the harem, one discovers that it seldom means real companionship between

the man and the woman; it never means equality; indeed it does not necessarily mean love. It is simply a universal custom, a necessity for the continuance of the home, or too frequently a merely selfish or sensual relationship for the perpetuation of the family. To be married gives no new knowledge, no broader field for the use of her faculties, no sense of responsibilities for Egyptian womanhood.

Egypt has no "new woman," but she has women of inherent intellectual capabilities although they have little or no chance to voice their convictions in a land where women never share their husband's life or work. Men have, until now, shrugged their shoulders contemptuously and turned a deaf ear to all efforts of the women of Egypt to form a higher standard for themselves. They have said, "It is only women gossiping among themselves. How can one expect women to be reasonable? It is best to turn a deaf ear to what goes on in the women's apartments." Yet they have been compelled to listen.

The women of this country are not militant—a suffragette parade through the streets of Cairo would be about as credible as a parade of the Egyptian kings in their mummy clothes—yet the

women are working silently in the things that affect their life happiness so vitally as does this question of marriage. I have heard more than one Egyptian lady say, "It is not right to turn us over for life to some man of whom we know nothing and on whom all our future happiness depends." But they insist that marriages in Egypt, with all the handicap of going to each other complete strangers, are frequently happy ones, because the little blind god, though barred by closely shuttered windows and customs and tradition from visiting the young girl previous to marriage, often finds a happy resting-place for his arrows in the young wife's heart.

CHAPTER IX

DIVORCE AND POLYGAMY

THE element of love being left out of marriage, it leads to the greatest evil of Moslem life, divorce. The percentage of divorce is very large, some say as high as 90 per cent. of the marriages ending in this legal separation. A native Biblewoman who has worked among Mohammedan women for fourteen years, when asked how many men or women of twenty-five years of age she thought likely to be living with their original partners, said, " If you mean that they have kept to each other and neither been divorced nor married to any one else, I should say perhaps ten in two thousand."

A foreigner who inquires concerning divorce will be told that it prevails only amongst the common people, but when you live with the Mohammedans for a time, you find that the laxness of the marriage tie is very prevalent among the better class. You

will be told that divorce is dying out with the coming of the new education, and in the same visit you will quite likely hear, " Yes, she has been divorced twice," or " He has had five wives, two dead, two divorced, and the position of this last one is precarious."

It is not a disgrace to be divorced. I was going with an Egyptian woman to call upon some of her friends, when she turned to me and said, " You know, the hostess in the first house where we will call was my husband's first wife." In answer to my amazed query, " And you go to see her ? " she replied, " Certainly, she did nothing. They never liked each other and could not get along, so he divorced her. She married again and is happy ; my husband, I hope, is happy, and it is much better than living together hating each other." The husband may divorce the wife without any misbehaviour on her part, and without assigning any reason.

A woman may have the judgment of divorce pronounced three times against her before it is necessary for her to leave her husband's house. The first time they may make peace without the Kadi's clerk, in the second they must have the assent of the official religious man, and in the third

the wife cannot return unless she be married to another man and divorced by him, when, if they wish, she may return as a new wife with a new betrothal and a new gift of money to her people. This third degree is rarely pronounced and then revoked, as the law is to enable the couple to think of the penalty and be cautious in exceeding the two-fold limit allowed.

Often the man sends the wife away and does not finally divorce her, in so doing not allowing her to remarry. In that case she may go to the official and demand a divorce. Also in some marriage contracts it is stipulated that the wife has the right to divorce the husband for certain stated reasons. The Court is never consulted in questions of either marriage or divorce unless the parties refuse to agree to the arrangements. In every quarter of the city and in every village there is an official who gives certificates of divorce, the copies of which are kept in a Government register.

A divorced wife must remain single three months before she may remarry, but a man may marry immediately. If the divorced couple have children, a girl stays with her mother until she is nine years of age, a boy until he is seven, that is if the mother remains unmarried. If she marries, the children

may go to *her* mother. The father is obliged by the laws of the Koran to support the children and to pay a just amount to the person undertaking their care. If the mother does not wish for the children, or if she remarries and has no family with whom they may be placed, the father is obliged to take them.

Often both parents remarry and the position of the children is very unfortunate, as neither of the members of the new household care for the children of their predecessors. I know of a case of a very good family living in the country near Cairo. The mother was divorced, and the sons, both being past the age of seven, were left with the father, and very badly treated by the new wife, who soon had sons of her own. They passed a most unhappy childhood, feeling bitter both towards father and mother' growing up without knowing what a real home or parental love might mean.

The divorced wife may take the furniture of her apartments and of course all her clothing and jewels. A woman told me that when she was divorced, " I took everything in the house, every movable thing. When he returned from town he did not have even a chair to sit upon." At the payment of the marriage money to the parents a certain amount is with-

held and this sum is to be given to the wife if she is divorced. A friend whose father stipulated that the sum paid upon the betrothal of his daughter was to be $1,500 only received $1,000, as $500 was kept as a sort of " alimony " if trouble should arise and the wife be returned to her people.

When the wife is of the poorer class and returns home with her children, she is given a corner of the room on which to put her sleeping-mat ; she shares in the common food, which is of the simplest, and there is always room in the street or the tiny courtyard for a few more babies to roll in the sand. Yet it is a burden, and a marriage is made for her as soon as possible, although her market value has deteriorated to a certain extent.

The rule of divorcing the wife once, then again, and finally the third time has degenerated among the common class in the husband's repeating the formula three times, " I divorce thee, I divorce thee, I divorce thee." But this is actually going against the law as laid down by Mohammed, who gave the three trials for divorce in order to give the estranged couple a chance for reconciliation, if possible.

It is so travestied at the present time that a man may go into a controversy with a friend and, to

strengthen his statement, say, perhaps the strongest oath a Moslem may make, " If what I say is not the truth, I divorce my wife by the triple divorce," and if he has not told the truth the oath may take effect. If he has several wives he may choose the one to put away. I doubted this statement and asked an educated man, a Sheikh, if it were true. He answered me that he regretted to say that if a man took such a foolish oath and was not telling the truth, he would be compelled to live up to his statement.

One of the weak points in this general divorce system is that it does not foster a community of interest in family life. The wife can never take a keen interest in the home, as she does not know how long it will be hers. There is a saying that a man's heart is as hard as a blow from an elbow, and that his love lasts but two months, and the woman is always afraid of losing this love and being returned to her parents. She does not care to help her husband increase his wealth as it may benefit another. She is never sure of her ground, and many of the women try to deceive their husbands in financial ways in order to have a little store laid away for a time of possible trouble. It is said among the lower classes of Moslems that when a Mohammedan

woman prepares a meal for her husband she is never sure to be his wife long enough to eat of it herself.

Not only is divorce the degenerating fact in the life of the women, but the effect upon the children is very bad. They hear of jealousy and hatred and learn of intrigue from the cradle. They get a false idea of woman's position, and their passions of hatred and revenge are early trained, as they constantly hear their parents spoken against and see the jealousy that exists between the mothers and the wives who have supplanted them.

But if divorce is very much alive in Egypt, that other great social evil, judged by Western standards, polygamy, is dying out. The Moslem says that Mohammed really intended all followers to have only one wife, although he allows them four. He says, " Of other women who seem good in your eyes, marry but two or three or four; and if ye still fear that ye shall not act equitably, then one only; or the slaves whom ye have acquired; this will make justice on your part easier." This is interpreted as meaning that all must be treated alike, and Mohammedans assert it is known that a man cannot love four women with equal fervour, nor treat them with equal consideration as there is

always sure to be a favourite. Therefore Mohammed meant that man should have but one wife.

Cynics say that polygamy is dying, not because it is believed to be following a higher moral principle to have but one wife, but for purely economic reasons. It is difficult to support several wives, especially if each one demands a separate house, as do those of the better class. Yet polygamy does prevail among the older generation and in the provinces, where living is not so expensive. It is also most prevalent amongst the Bedouins.

I visited in a home where there were three wives, all seemingly friendly. I also know a woman who is one of two wives, although they do not live in the same town. She married her husband when very young and bore him two children, and they seemed very happy, until one day he announced that he was going to marry again. She took her little girl and went to her people, where she lived very unhappily for two years, as her parents were dead and her uncles and cousins made her feel that the bread of charity was dry bread. The husband did not find the new wife especially amiable and he divorced her and sought again the first wife. She returned with him and for a time all went well, when he finally married again. She could do no-

thing, having tasted the bitterness of being a poor relation, so she remains, never showing what must be within her heart. Her eyes sparkle with fun and she is as jolly and light-hearted as if, according to our ideas, the greatest tragedy of a woman's life had not come to her.

According to custom, if the first wife does not make trouble on the entrance of a second wife into the household, the husband gives her the same amount of presents he gives the new wife, with an additional gift of value. In this particular case my friend received in addition to some jewellery and silk for gowns, a piece of land worth about five thousand dollars.

An Egyptian lady near Assiut, in speaking of her father-in-law, said, " He has had seven wives." At my horrified looks she hastened to assure me that they were not all at the same time. " He is a true Mohammedan. One is dead, two divorced, and he now has only four, the lawful number."

In these domestic relations, as throughout every Egyptian institution, the influence of the faith of Islam is distinctly traced. While there is a conflict at times between modernity and medievalism, as the life of the West flows down into this old land, this conflict is yet but as a surface affair. The main

stream of civilization is still strongly Islamic. The voice and example of the Arabian Prophet are mightier than any outside influence in present-day Egypt, and that, in the last analysis, is the guiding star of Egyptian men and women of the home, however ingeniously his followers claim to interpret him in the terms of modernity.

CHAPTER X

AMUSEMENTS OF THE EGYPTIAN WOMEN

I AM often asked the question "How does the Egyptian lady amuse herself?" With the nervous, restless people of the Western world the question of amusement is a very serious one, and we work hard trying to find new ways to pass the hours. With the Eastern woman, amusement, as we understand it, does not exist, nor is it necessary for her. She is first of all a housekeeper and attends personally to many details of her home that, with us, are left to servants. She often sees all the provisions that are brought into the house, inspects the produce of the market that the cook brings each morning, carries keys to the store-rooms, and gives out personally the daily allowances for the food of her household. She knows how to cook and thinks it no disgrace to cook the dinner for the day or to show the servants how to prepare a new dish.

With the middle class the children's clothing is made by the mother, and even with the rich the mother superintends the making of the wardrobes of all under her roof. It is a fact that to-day in Cairo the ready-made clothing has made its appearance, and the house tailor is not always one of the regular domestic staff, but still the wife attends personally to many things, which perhaps is a blessing in disguise for this woman shut away from the world.

I know a woman whose husband is one of the great men of Egypt, and she always arranges his clothing for him in the morning, and looks it over carefully when it is taken off. It is no light task to keep it in repair and free from spot, as the long flowing gowns are made of light coloured silks, and the cloaks are particularly prone to sweep up the dust of the city streets.

Still, with her many duties, there are hours that hang heavily upon the Egyptian woman's hands, and it is with the passing of these hours that we are curious. The Egyptian woman does not know of the afternoon call as we understand it, unless she be the wife of an official in Cairo who has become Europeanized. With the great middle class it would be a matter of amusement and gossip for many

hours if a woman should come to her with her card-case in her hands and pass a few moments in idle remarks. She does not go to the house of a friend unless invited there for some special purpose. As she says, "I wait for a wedding or a birth or a death, then we meet and enjoy ourselves in a much more thorough manner than do you of the Occident, who look so uncomfortable while you are being amused. Then I go home and hope for another wedding or birth or death."

Visiting is generally among relatives. Few friends are made outside of the circle of relations, and the older, conservative women pride themselves on knowing no one except the members of their family or those of the family of their husband. The relatives —and these are always most numerous—come to the great houses and stay indefinitely. No great provision need be made for an added influx of guests. They can make themselves comfortable in circumstances that, to say the least, would appear to us as crowded.

I have a few friends in Egypt upon whom I can call without the formality of a special invitation, and one day I went to see one of them, a typical woman of the old school, who practically never left the harem, although her daughter was a very

CAIRO : HOUSES WITH MOUSHRABEAHS (LATTICES BEFORE THE WOMEN'S QUARTERS).

modern young woman married to a Government official.

When I arrived I found this daughter sitting on a divan in front of the moushrabeah evidently completely absorbed in something across the street. She laughed rather apologetically and said, "The daughter of the house across the way is betrothed to a rich merchant, and I am waiting to see the betrothal presents arrive. I have asked some friends to come and watch for them; stay and be one of the party." We sat there in the dim room eating sweets and drinking coffee and talking in low tones. She said, "Behind every moushrabeah on this street are women doing just what we are doing. When I was engaged, they did the same."

As we were sitting there, three veiled figures came in, kissed Fatima on both cheeks, and were introduced to me. They took off the piece of white chiffon that veiled their faces, untied the black cape-like harborah that covered the head and shoulders, slipped off their outside skirts and stood arrayed in gorgeous galabeighs or house dresses. One was of pink silk, one of canary satin, and the third was a light blue. They were elaborately trimmed about the neck and shoulders with lace and gold passementerie, and had a train that

swept the floor as they walked. Their hair, braided in two braids hanging down the back like that of our schoolgirls, was partially covered with veils of spangled net that hung nearly to the waist.

These friends of Fatima settled themselves upon the low divan in front of the window, took the coffee from the serving maid, talked and gesticulated, making their bracelets tinkle as they waved their little arms in the air. They spoke no English, but Fatima interpreted for them, and I could see that they were very curious about me.

I, luckily, had on some jewellery that is generally reserved for dinner parties, for I had learned that when calling upon Egyptian ladies it is as well to wear as much jewellery as one can and still preserve one's self-respect. Eastern women cannot understand *not* wearing jewels if fortunate enough to possess such tangible proofs of a husband's esteem.

One of the guests, a girl not more than seventeen, was specially gay and jolly, as it was her first visit for a year. She had married into a family or clan who did not permit a woman to leave the house of her husband until the first child was born. Her son was now a couple of months old, and she was again peeping into the outside world, which had been so completely closed to her for more than a

women are working silently in the things that affect their life happiness so vitally as does this question of marriage. I have heard more than one Egyptian lady say, " It is not right to turn us over for life to some man of whom we know nothing and on whom all our future happiness depends." But they insist that marriages in Egypt, with all the handicap of going to each other complete strangers, are frequently happy ones, because the little blind god, though barred by closely shuttered windows and customs and tradition from visiting the young girl previous to marriage, often finds a happy resting-place for his arrows in the young wife's heart.

CHAPTER IX

DIVORCE AND POLYGAMY

THE element of love being left out of marriage, it leads to the greatest evil of Moslem life, divorce. The percentage of divorce is very large, some say as high as 90 per cent. of the marriages ending in this legal separation. A native Biblewoman who has worked among Mohammedan women for fourteen years, when asked how many men or women of twenty-five years of age she thought likely to be living with their original partners, said, " If you mean that they have kept to each other and neither been divorced nor married to any one else, I should say perhaps ten in two thousand."

A foreigner who inquires concerning divorce will be told that it prevails only amongst the common people, but when you live with the Mohammedans for a time, you find that the laxness of the marriage tie is very prevalent among the better class. You

will be told that divorce is dying out with the coming of the new education, and in the same visit you will quite likely hear, " Yes, she has been divorced twice," or " He has had five wives, two dead, two divorced, and the position of this last one is precarious."

It is not a disgrace to be divorced. I was going with an Egyptian woman to call upon some of her friends, when she turned to me and said, " You know, the hostess in the first house where we will call was my husband's first wife." In answer to my amazed query, " And you go to see her ? " she replied, " Certainly, she did nothing. They never liked each other and could not get along, so he divorced her. She married again and is happy ; my husband, I hope, is happy, and it is much better than living together hating each other." The husband may divorce the wife without any misbehaviour on her part, and without assigning any reason.

A woman may have the judgment of divorce pronounced three times against her before it is necessary for her to leave her husband's house. The first time they may make peace without the Kadi's clerk, in the second they must have the assent of the official religious man, and in the third

the wife cannot return unless she be married to another man and divorced by him, when, if they wish, she may return as a new wife with a new betrothal and a new gift of money to her people. This third degree is rarely pronounced and then revoked, as the law is to enable the couple to think of the penalty and be cautious in exceeding the two-fold limit allowed. .

Often the man sends the wife away and does not finally divorce her, in so doing not allowing her to remarry. In that case she may go to the official and demand a divorce. Also in some marriage contracts it is stipulated that the wife has the right to divorce the husband for certain stated reasons. The Court is never consulted in questions of either marriage or divorce unless the parties refuse to agree to the arrangements. In every quarter of the city and in every village there is an official who gives certificates of divorce, the copies of which are kept in a Government register.

A divorced wife must remain single three months before she may remarry, but a man may marry immediately. If the divorced couple have children, a girl stays with her mother until she is nine years of age, a boy until he is seven, that is if the mother remains unmarried. If she marries, the children

may go to *her* mother. The father is obliged by the laws of the Koran to support the children and to pay a just amount to the person undertaking their care. If the mother does not wish for the children, or if she remarries and has no family with whom they may be placed, the father is obliged to take them.

Often both parents remarry and the position of the children is very unfortunate, as neither of the members of the new household care for the children of their predecessors. I know of a case of a very good family living in the country near Cairo. The mother was divorced, and the sons, both being past the age of seven, were left with the father, and very badly treated by the new wife, who soon had sons of her own. They passed a most unhappy childhood, feeling bitter both towards father and mother' growing up without knowing what a real home or parental love might mean.

The divorced wife may take the furniture of her apartments and of course all her clothing and jewels. A woman told me that when she was divorced, " I took everything in the house, every movable thing. When he returned from town he did not have even a chair to sit upon." At the payment of the marriage money to the parents a certain amount is with-

held and this sum is to be given to the wife if she is divorced. A friend whose father stipulated that the sum paid upon the betrothal of his daughter was to be $1,500 only received $1,000, as $500 was kept as a sort of "alimony" if trouble should arise and the wife be returned to her people.

When the wife is of the poorer class and returns home with her children, she is given a corner of the room on which to put her sleeping-mat; she shares in the common food, which is of the simplest, and there is always room in the street or the tiny courtyard for a few more babies to roll in the sand. Yet it is a burden, and a marriage is made for her as soon as possible, although her market value has deteriorated to a certain extent.

The rule of divorcing the wife once, then again, and finally the third time has degenerated among the common class in the husband's repeating the formula three times, "I divorce thee, I divorce thee, I divorce thee." But this is actually going against the law as laid down by Mohammed, who gave the three trials for divorce in order to give the estranged couple a chance for reconciliation, if possible.

It is so travestied at the present time that a man may go into a controversy with a friend and, to

strengthen his statement, say, perhaps the strongest oath a Moslem may make, " If what I say is not the truth, I divorce my wife by the triple divorce," and if he has not told the truth the oath may take effect. If he has several wives he may choose the one to put away. I doubted this statement and asked an educated man, a Sheikh, if it were true. He answered me that he regretted to say that if a man took such a foolish oath and was not telling the truth, he would be compelled to live up to his statement.

One of the weak points in this general divorce system is that it does not foster a community of interest in family life. The wife can never take a keen interest in the home, as she does not know how long it will be hers. There is a saying that a man's heart is as hard as a blow from an elbow, and that his love lasts but two months, and the woman is always afraid of losing this love and being returned to her parents. She does not care to help her husband increase his wealth as it may benefit another. She is never sure of her ground, and many of the women try to deceive their husbands in financial ways in order to have a little store laid away for a time of possible trouble. It is said among the lower classes of Moslems that when a Mohammedan

woman prepares a meal for her husband she is never sure to be his wife long enough to eat of it herself.

Not only is divorce the degenerating fact in the life of the women, but the effect upon the children is very bad. They hear of jealousy and hatred and learn of intrigue from the cradle. They get a false idea of woman's position, and their passions of hatred and revenge are early trained, as they constantly hear their parents spoken against and see the jealousy that exists between the mothers and the wives who have supplanted them.

But if divorce is very much alive in Egypt, that other great social evil, judged by Western standards, polygamy, is dying out. The Moslem says that Mohammed really intended all followers to have only one wife, although he allows them four. He says, " Of other women who seem good in your eyes, marry but two or three or four; and if ye still fear that ye shall not act equitably, then one only; or the slaves whom ye have acquired; this will make justice on your part easier." This is interpreted as meaning that all must be treated alike, and Mohammedans assert it is known that a man cannot love four women with equal fervour, nor treat them with equal consideration as there is

always sure to be a favourite. Therefore Mohammed meant that man should have but one wife.

Cynics say that polygamy is dying, not because it is believed to be following a higher moral principle to have but one wife, but for purely economic reasons. It is difficult to support several wives, especially if each one demands a separate house, as do those of the better class. Yet polygamy does prevail among the older generation and in the provinces, where living is not so expensive. It is also most prevalent amongst the Bedouins.

I visited in a home where there were three wives, all seemingly friendly. I also know a woman who is one of two wives, although they do not live in the same town. She married her husband when very young and bore him two children, and they seemed very happy, until one day he announced that he was going to marry again. She took her little girl and went to her people, where she lived very unhappily for two years, as her parents were dead and her uncles and cousins made her feel that the bread of charity was dry bread. The husband did not find the new wife especially amiable and he divorced her and sought again the first wife. She returned with him and for a time all went well, when he finally married again. She could do no-

thing, having tasted the bitterness of being a poor relation, so she remains, never showing what must be within her heart. Her eyes sparkle with fun and she is as jolly and light-hearted as if, according to our ideas, the greatest tragedy of a woman's life had not come to her.

According to custom, if the first wife does not make trouble on the entrance of a second wife into the household, the husband gives her the same amount of presents he gives the new wife, with an additional gift of value. In this particular case my friend received in addition to some jewellery and silk for gowns, a piece of land worth about five thousand dollars.

An Egyptian lady near Assiut, in speaking of her father-in-law, said, "He has had seven wives." At my horrified looks she hastened to assure me that they were not all at the same time. "He is a true Mohammedan. One is dead, two divorced, and he now has only four, the lawful number."

In these domestic relations, as throughout every Egyptian institution, the influence of the faith of Islam is distinctly traced. While there is a conflict at times between modernity and medievalism, as the life of the West flows down into this old land, this conflict is yet but as a surface affair. The main

stream of civilization is still strongly Islamic. The voice and example of the Arabian Prophet are mightier than any outside influence in present-day Egypt, and that, in the last analysis, is the guiding star of Egyptian men and women of the home, however ingeniously his followers claim to interpret him in the terms of modernity.

CHAPTER X

AMUSEMENTS OF THE EGYPTIAN WOMEN

I AM often asked the question "How does the Egyptian lady amuse herself?" With the nervous, restless people of the Western world the question of amusement is a very serious one, and we work hard trying to find new ways to pass the hours. With the Eastern woman, amusement, as we understand it, does not exist, nor is it necessary for her. She is first of all a housekeeper and attends personally to many details of her home that, with us, are left to servants. She often sees all the provisions that are brought into the house, inspects the produce of the market that the cook brings each morning, carries keys to the store-rooms, and gives out personally the daily allowances for the food of her household. She knows how to cook and thinks it no disgrace to cook the dinner for the day or to show the servants how to prepare a new dish.

With the middle class the children's clothing is made by the mother, and even with the rich the mother superintends the making of the wardrobes of all under her roof. It is a fact that to-day in Cairo the ready-made clothing has made its appearance, and the house tailor is not always one of the regular domestic staff, but still the wife attends personally to many things, which perhaps is a blessing in disguise for this woman shut away from the world.

I know a woman whose husband is one of the great men of Egypt, and she always arranges his clothing for him in the morning, and looks it over carefully when it is taken off. It is no light task to keep it in repair and free from spot, as the long flowing gowns are made of light coloured silks, and the cloaks are particularly prone to sweep up the dust of the city streets.

Still, with her many duties, there are hours that hang heavily upon the Egyptian woman's hands, and it is with the passing of these hours that we are curious. The Egyptian woman does not know of the afternoon call as we understand it, unless she be the wife of an official in Cairo who has become Europeanized. With the great middle class it would be a matter of amusement and gossip for many

hours if a woman should come to her with her card-case in her hands and pass a few moments in idle remarks. She does not go to the house of a friend unless invited there for some special purpose. As she says, "I wait for a wedding or a birth or a death, then we meet and enjoy ourselves in a much more thorough manner than do you of the Occident, who look so uncomfortable while you are being amused. Then I go home and hope for another wedding or birth or death."

Visiting is generally among relatives. Few friends are made outside of the circle of relations, and the older, conservative women pride themselves on knowing no one except the members of their family or those of the family of their husband. The relatives —and these are always most numerous—come to the great houses and stay indefinitely. No great provision need be made for an added influx of guests. They can make themselves comfortable in circumstances that, to say the least, would appear to us as crowded.

I have a few friends in Egypt upon whom I can call without the formality of a special invitation, and one day I went to see one of them, a typical woman of the old school, who practically never left the harem, although her daughter was a very

CAIRO :HOUSES WITH MOUSHRABEAHS (LATTICES BEFORE THE WOMEN'S QUARTERS).

modern young woman married to a Government official.

When I arrived I found this daughter sitting on a divan in front of the moushrabeah evidently completely absorbed in something across the street. She laughed rather apologetically and said, "The daughter of the house across the way is betrothed to a rich merchant, and I am waiting to see the betrothal presents arrive. I have asked some friends to come and watch for them; stay and be one of the party." We sat there in the dim room eating sweets and drinking coffee and talking in low tones. She said, "Behind every moushrabeah on this street are women doing just what we are doing. When I was engaged, they did the same."

As we were sitting there, three veiled figures came in, kissed Fatima on both cheeks, and were introduced to me. They took off the piece of white chiffon that veiled their faces, untied the black cape-like harborah that covered the head and shoulders, slipped off their outside skirts and stood arrayed in gorgeous galabeighs or house dresses. One was of pink silk, one of canary satin, and the third was a light blue. They were elaborately trimmed about the neck and shoulders with lace and gold passementerie, and had a train that

swept the floor as they walked. Their hair, braided in two braids hanging down the back like that of our schoolgirls, was partially covered with veils of spangled net that hung nearly to the waist.

These friends of Fatima settled themselves upon the low divan in front of the window, took the coffee from the serving maid, talked and gesticulated, making their bracelets tinkle as they waved their little arms in the air. They spoke no English, but Fatima interpreted for them, and I could see that they were very curious about me.

I, luckily, had on some jewellery that is generally reserved for dinner parties, for I had learned that when calling upon Egyptian ladies it is as well to wear as much jewellery as one can and still preserve one's self-respect. Eastern women cannot understand *not* wearing jewels if fortunate enough to possess such tangible proofs of a husband's esteem.

One of the guests, a girl not more than seventeen, was specially gay and jolly, as it was her first visit for a year. She had married into a family or clan who did not permit a woman to leave the house of her husband until the first child was born. Her son was now a couple of months old, and she was again peeping into the outside world, which had been so completely closed to her for more than a

year. She was wildly excited at the thought that she was going to the opera, where she would hear *Faust* sung in Arabic. She would sit behind a lattice that would effectually screen her from the public, but allowed her to see all that was going on in the house as well as on the stage.

As the carts came to the house opposite, all crowded close to the window, the mother and three or four servants taking as active an interest in the contents of the tiny wagons as did the girls. They commented upon the arrangement, and admired the fiancé's knowledge of the smart shops on the Kaiser en Nil, as boxes with long ribbon-streamers were taken inside the house, plainly showing that they came from the French shops that understand catering for the Europeanized Egyptian. They discussed the social position of the fiancé and of his bride-to-be, and of their relations even to the third generation, and one could plainly see that here, as well as in the social life of the Western world, the question of " family " and " being smart " and " who's who," was a most important one.

One of the girls told me she would have her mother send me an invitation for a party which she was giving for her friends, all of the old type of Egyptian woman. She laughed, " Perhaps you

may not like it, as after dinner the Koran is to be chanted by blind men." I, of course, was delighted to be able to see this form of entertainment of which I had heard so much.

On the appointed evening, about six o'clock, a carriage came for me and I was driven to the house, where I found Fatima, who was to act as guide and interpreter. There were about thirty women in all, mostly relatives of the hostess. We were taken into a large room lighted by brass lamps hanging by chains from the ceiling. We had dropped our slippers at the entrance of the room and were seated on divans. These divans were wide and comfortable and covered with mattresses made of cotton or wool, over which was thrown a rug. The women who are strict followers of the Prophet will not buy foreign mattresses for these lounging places, although they are more comfortable, for fear that they will be contaminated by using something containing the hair of that hated animal, the pig.

Some of the women were smoking water-pipes, and others cigarettes. Coffee was passed and a sweet sherbet. After a time low stands, with large brass trays on them, were brought in, and the food was placed upon them. A servant came with a

brass ewer and basin, water was poured over the hands of each guest, and dried upon a towel offered by another servant. Then we took our places around the trays, sitting upon the floor. There were seven people to a table, and it was very sociable. The food consisted of mutton cooked in many ways, chicken, rice, and vegetables. After the meat courses were removed a great many sweets were served, things of Turkish origin prevailing. Coffee was served, the ewers were again passed around, the hands cleansed, and we rose to go into the courtyard, where the chanting was to take place.

It was a very pretty courtyard with a tall palm-tree in the corner, a fountain in the centre, deep divans around the sides, and a room opening from one end with only arches to act as partitions. In this room were the singers, and we arranged ourselves facing them, some sitting on mats on the floor, some on the divans. The servants—and they seemed innumerable—grouped themselves at the back, and all prepared to listen to the words of their sacred book. The chief singer chanted a line, then the rest took it up in a Greek chorus effect, and it was very beautiful. It lasted for at least an hour and a half, every one listening

most respectfully, then the singers rose, bowed to the ladies and were led away.

After they were gone, chatting commenced again, pipes were brought, coffee was served. Soon maids brought harboroughs, skirts were donned, veils were put over the faces, and each woman, with her attendant maid, was taken to her carriage and departed. No man, not even a male servant, had taken part in the performance, with the exception of the blind men who, of course, did not count, as they could not look upon the unveiled faces.

I asked if that was an unusual form of entertainment, and was told that it was a very popular means of entertaining friends, as their religion is closely associated with every act of a pious Mohammedan, and it does not seem incongruous to them to chant their scriptures as we would present a theatrical entertainment.

There is always a certain amount of entertaining on the birth of a child to an Egyptian family. At about the seventh day invitations are sent to all friends and relatives, and every one, with a present of some kind in his hand, goes to the home of the new arrival. A dinner is served, and several hours are passed in the joyous, unconventional amusements of the Eastern woman. Postures are

more lax, and language is often a little more daring than it would be to women who did not know that they were absolutely free from the intrusion of a man. They fully understand that no man, the husband of the hostess, or any male relative, would dare to come into the woman's quarters when she was entertaining guests. On these joyous occasions when births or weddings are celebrated, great crowds of beggars come to the doorways and are given food.

Funerals cannot be placed under the head of amusements, but the calls of condolence are often a break in the monotonous lives of these women who so rarely go from their homes. On the third day after a death, the fortieth, and on each anniversary, special services are held in the homes from which some one has departed.

Another place of meeting with each other is the cemetery, where the women go on certain days to pray by the grave of a loved one, although this is generally confined to the members of the family. Yet often friends meet there, and, after the prayers and duties performed for the dead, they sit and have a good visit with the living. Ladies go in their carriages or automobiles, and the more common people in the donkey-carts that one sees in every

street in Cairo carrying their loads of veiled black figures.

In the olden days, especially before the advent of the modernized woman, one of the chief delights of the women's quarters was the merchant from the bazaars who brought to the homes the rich silks and satins, the gold and silver embroideries, the bangles of heavy gold, and the anklets, earrings, and necklaces with which the Egyptian woman so freely decks herself. Then, and even now, a conservative woman does not frequent the shops. They must come to her.

The goods are always brought into the harems by a woman, and one of her chief stocks-in-trade is that of being an entertaining gossip. The goods are laid upon a rug in a large room or court, the mother of the household sits in front of them, with all the women of the place grouped around her, admiring, fingering, chattering, and gossiping. They hear from the vender what has happened in the other harems, who is betrothed, who married, if the marriage is successful, the amount of the dowry, the financial standing of the husband, the jewels of the wife; they learn who is divorced and where the stork has alighted since the purveyor of news was last at the house. It takes hours,

BOATS ON THE NILE.

and often, like her Western sister, the ladies of the harem simply "shop" and the goods are taken away the same as they came.

For ladies living in Cairo or near a canal, boat excursions are often taken. A lady invites her friends, and they go on their houseboat, closely veiled until within the cabin, where the veils are removed, and they slowly drift up or down the river, eating innumerable sweets, and drinking altogether too much Turkish coffee. They discuss their friends and their friends' friends, as only women will when they have no definite objective in life, and live simply from day to day.

A few of the more progressive ladies are trying to start women's clubs in Cairo. There are one or two associations who meet mainly for a charitable cause, and at the yearly charity bazaar the harem ladies of Cairo can be found in great numbers on the days set apart for them. A noted suffragette leader visited Cairo and tried to interest its women in "Votes for Women," but her arguments fell on deaf ears, as the Egyptian woman can hardly as yet conceive of a state of affairs where ladies would really care to take an active part in the work of the outside world, coming in contact with men in a public manner.

They are true women of the home, which they feel is their sphere, and, in fact, whatever we may hear in regard to the shut-in women, we must confess that in the home they are supreme. They are much more powerful than we think, and wield a stronger influence upon the men than perhaps do we of the Western world. For one thing, within the average home there are so many women, relatives and their relatives, servants, etc., that if the feminine sentiment is against a man he has a very bad time. There is such a thing as passive resistance that is quite as effective as armed warfare, and the women of the East know how to use this weapon in all its subtleties. It is a very strong-minded man who can resist the injured looks and unhappy faces of a host of women. If, in addition to her mother and her sisters and her servants, the clever wife can enlist the sympathy of her mother-in-law and the divers and sundry women of her husband's family, the man may as well give up. He is overpowered by the sheer weight of numbers, and the only course for him is to acquiesce in whatever demands are made, then leave his place of defeat and hie himself to a coffee-house where, over his water-pipe, he may soothe his ruffled feelings and find peace.

It is hard to say, outside of the little social life among relatives and a few friends, what are the amusements of the Egyptian lady. She sings, she generally plays some musical instrument—now it is the piano for the educated girl, and in nearly every house of means is found the Victrola, with songs in Arabic and English, French and Italian. In Cairo she has much more opportunity of being gay, as she can go to the theatre, the opera, and even on little shopping tours to the big European shops or to the tiny bazaars in the native quarter. In the smaller cities and the villages she is restricted to the fêtes and festivities of her social sphere.

There are many magazines and papers, novels and books of every kind printed in Arabic, for the woman who has not advanced far enough to read those in French or English, and now, when education for the woman has become such a fetish in Egypt, these popular educators are found in every home. If the mother cannot read them—and few of the women of the older day can read—the daughter and the grand-daughters can read to them the news of the world, and there are few women who have not at least a superficial knowledge of what is passing outside their walls.

CHAPTER XI

HOSPITALITY

H. C. TRUMBULL, in his book, *Studies in Oriental Social Life,* quotes an incident given by Warburton as illustrating to what lengths the Arab of the desert will go in his ideas of hospitality, even when the guest is an enemy. It dated from the days of the conflict in Egypt between the Mameluke Beys and Mohammed Ali in the early part of the nineteenth century. A Bedouin chief was seeking the life of Elfy Bey, the deadly enemy of his friend and ally Osman. During the absence of the chief from his tent Elfy Bey entered it boldly, and hastily ate some bread which he found there. The chief's wife, recognizing the stranger guest, said, "I know you are Elfy Bey, and my husband's life, perhaps, at this moment depends upon his taking yours. Rest now and refresh yourself, then take the best horse you can find and fly. The moment you are out of our horizon and

A GUARD AT THE BEDOUIN CAMP.

THE BEDOUIN CHIEF.

the sun is above it, the tribe will be in pursuit of you."

When this story reached the ears of Osman he demanded of the old chief if his wife had really saved the life of their deadliest foe. "Most true, praise be to Allah," replied the chief, drawing himself proudly up and presenting a jewelled dagger to the Bey. "This weapon," he continued, "was your gift to me in the hour of your favour. Had I met Elfy Bey it would have freed you from your enemy. Had my wife betrayed the hospitality of the tent, it would have drunk her blood. Now it is yours again. If you will, you may use it against me." And the Arab flung it at the Mameluke's feet.

This is not an exaggerated idea of hospitality as understood and practised to-day by the people of the tents, where that virtue is far more reaching in its scope and exacting in its obligations than anything which we understand by that name in the West. The idea of true hospitality is indicated in the Oriental proverb, "Every stranger is an invited guest, and the guest while in the house is the lord thereof."

This welcoming of the stranger and the traveller as well as the friend is practised by all Eastern races, but if one is to see and understand what the

word " welcome " really means he should go to the Arab of the desert. There hospitality is practised in all its purity, according to the traditions of these high-strung, impulsive, restless people, who, with their emotional temperament, give impetuosity to the more sluggish, lethargic Egyptian, communicating some of their ceaseless energy to everything with which they come in contact. " As calm as an Arab " is not a true description of these desert people. They are nervous, high-strung, restless, adventurous, and they have absorbed these characteristics into their very being until they have become permanent marks of their race. In France, wherever there exist centres of strife, they say, " Look for the woman " ; in North Africa and Egypt it is " Look for the Arab."

That the Arab is not an empire-builder is unquestioned. But certain historians pervert the truth when they tell us that the effects of the Arab are always sinister, that they bring all countries which they have inhabited, and in which they have been permitted to run their course, to ruin. They say the Bedouin is the author of complete desolation, and quote the gradual obliteration of Roman and Byzantine civilization dating from the Arab conquest of the seventh century.

It is claimed by these same historians that the root of it is to be found in the instinctive repugnance of the Arab for anything in the nature of habit, routine, a settled existence, a fixed round of duties. He will not indulge in industry and enterprise that impede his liberty and freedom in any manner. He is not practical, does not reason, is swayed purely by his emotions and his sentiment. He will throw his life away with a bravado that causes the people of more sluggish blood to gasp in astonishment for a cause that appeals to his emotions, but he will not harness those emotions or this wonderful energy to anything productive. He is religious when his religion appeals to his imagination, as does the religion of Mohammed. None save these Arabs have succeeded in propagating the faith of El Islam, and every movement of revival comes direct from the desert.

To see the Bedouin one must go to his home and see him in his native tents. There are Bedouins in the cities, and one soon learns to distinguish them, with their keen eyes, eager faces, and majestic stride, from the more contemplative, quiescent Egyptian. But in the city he is not his true self, it is among the shifting sands of the desert that these fascinating people are at their best. There

the Bedouin carries out his tribal customs, and there one realizes that it is true that the virtue of hospitality is the first and greatest in the eyes of the Arab. To share food and drink with another is to covenant with him in amity for the period of his stay as a guest in the domain of his host. Even to give a drink of water to a guest is to recognize that he is worthy of peaceable reception, while to partake of salt is to enter into a brotherhood.

Mohammed enjoins the duty of hospitality on his followers as indicative of their state of heart before the all-seeing God. "Whoever," he says, "believes in God and the resurrection, must respect his guest; and the time of his being kind to him is one day and one night; and the period of entertaining him is three days; and after that if he does it longer, it benefits him more, but it is not right for a guest to stay in the house of a host so long as to incommode him."

Tourists passing through Egypt hear and read of these people who appeal so to the imagination, and around whom are woven the romances and legends dear to the Western heart, and often with a dragoman they make trips to the desert, living in their hired tents, eating the same food they would at Shepheard's Hotel, doing the thing that the

A BEDOUIN TENT.

dragoman thinks would appeal to the foreigner, and seeing the desert through the eyes of this clever showman, who makes everything picturesque if it is not already made so by nature. He is determined that his people will feel they have wisely invested their five pounds per day in desert scenery, even if he has to import his Bedouins from the neighbouring villages. But we were long enough in Egypt to know that that was not the way to see the desert nor its people, and we were delighted when we received an invitation from a chief of a Bedouin tribe to pass several days with him at his castle on the edge of the desert.

We found a carriage awaiting us at the train—in fact a servant of the household had met us in the railway carriage several stations before our ultimate destination, assuring us in various signs and gestures mixed with Arabic and salaams, that we would be very much welcome at the castle of his chief. We drove for miles across the well-irrigated lands, dotted with the variegated gowns of the Fellaheen cutting the wheat with the old-fashioned sickle, the donkey trotting along under his burden of *bersein*, while here and there at the doors of the mud huts women and children peered at us from their half-veiled faces. We saw

everywhere pictures that might well have belonged to the time of the Old Testament, women grinding at the mill, the water buffalo yoked with a camel drawing a crooked stick for a plough —it was all weird and strange to Western eyes.

But the "tent" which our romantic soul had pictured was a very creditable brace of modern buildings which might have been found in a well-ordered community in Southern France or Virginia. To be sure the buildings were surrounded by a wall from over which the tall palm-trees peered to remind us that we were in Egypt; the court-yard into which we drove was austere and barren almost as the sands of the desert which we could see in the distance; but to say that we, who had imagined ourselves living like nomads, sleeping on the sand beneath the black tents of the desert people, were surprised at the modern sumptuousness of the habitation that confronted us, poorly expresses our impression.

As we drove into this semi-royal enclosure of the really sovereign potentate who rules with no mean government thousands of Bedouins scattered through Egypt and Tripoli, we were greeted by men of varying ages and degrees of distinction, all members of this important tribe which boasts of nine hundred

years of ancestry, and which had originally come from Arabia, the native land of the Bedouin.

Our host came to the carriage and welcomed us in French, and with him his cousin, who spoke English. The chief was a tall man of about thirty-five years of age, very handsome, in his dark dashing way. He was beautifully clothed in an underdress of striped silk, lavender and white, it only showing at the long cuffs and where it was folded over in front. Over that he had a long flowing gown of a darker shade of lavender, and over it all the black cloak of the Egyptian. On his head was the red tarboosh with a large blue tassel in it. His head was not bound with the white turban of the Mohammedan, although he is a very strict follower of the Prophet.

He conducted us through a big gateway to the house, which was a rambling two-storied affair, with many rooms and courts, as I afterwards found. In the reception-room, which was furnished in French fashion, we sat down, feeling rather stiff and formal. The host said, "I wish to welcome you and say my house is yours. Please consider yourself as if you were in your own home." Soon coffee was served, and we found that coffee is the prelude to all social intercourse in Egypt, and especially with these hospitable Bedouins.

After a few moments' conversation a servant entered the room and said Madame awaited her guest in the harem. That magic word harem of which travellers hear so much while journeying in an Eastern country, and into which it is almost impossible to penetrate, gave me a slight thrill. My host excused himself to my husband, turning him over to the cousin for entertainment, and we followed the servant into a courtyard and through another gateway into a garden, then passed out of the sunlight into a cool dark room, empty except for a great water-jar which was standing in the draught to cool the water by evaporation.

At an archway was standing a lady dressed most exquisitely in a modern French dress, with a necklace of diamonds and emeralds, diamonds in her ears, innumerable bracelets and rings. She came to me and said in English with just a trace of accent, "It is so nice of you to come to me." She was very, very pretty, had a most jolly laugh, and all my fears went away at once. She was simply a happy girl, wanting to be amused and often finding the days long within the four walls of the harem.

We went upstairs to a sitting-room furnished in European manner and had tea. The husband left us, and in fact I saw very little of him, except from

a distance, as he was a very busy man, attending to his estate or discharging the innumerable duties that arose in regard to the travellers who made his outer courtyard their resting-place in travelling from one part of the desert to another. This guest-house was always filled with men who were entertained free of charge by their chief. There were seldom less than twenty enjoying the hospitality of their host. Many of the visitors were on their way to Tripoli, thirty days by camel, and my host told me that much of their conversation was in regard to the war in progress between Italy and Turkey, in which many members of their tribe were fighting.

In regard to this war and the Bedouins in Egypt, an amusing instance is narrated which reveals Lord Kitchener's mingled powers of strategy and resourcefulness when certain chiefs of Bedouin tribes went to him expressing a desire to gather a large force of their brethren and join in guerrilla warfare against Italy. It must be remembered that the Egyptian dreads more than all else conscription in the army, and the Bedouins have been exempt from service as soldiers. Upon receiving this announcement from these particular chiefs, the soldier of Khartoum faced these men of the desert solemnly, saying that

he was sorry that he had heretofore overlooked their warlike and soldierly propensities, that he would immediately see that Egypt did not lose such heroes thirsting for glory upon the battlefield, but would have them all enrolled at once in the Egyptian Army under the same terms as the Fellaheen. It was stated that the dust that rose from beneath the flying feet of those Bedouin chiefs was like unto that which rolls over Egypt from a thick khamseen, the wind that blows in blinding clouds the sands from the desert.

But these Bedouins must not be thought of as mere wanderers in the desert. They are, as far as their leaders are concerned, men of business, sometimes owning large estates and competing with the most advanced Egyptians in agricultural pursuits. This chief was not only a great landowner and a business man, but he was also a ruler and a judge. Members of his tribe bring to him all kinds of cases, and his modern Bedouin tent is often converted into a tribunal. The case may be of murder, because these passionate sons of the desert still hold to the law of a tooth for a tooth, and a life for a life, and feuds are carried on until blood has been paid by blood. I heard it said as quite a natural thing, when speaking of the murder of a man, " Of course

his son must avenge his death." In the olden time the price of the life of a man was a certain number of camels, that of a woman half the number of animals. To-day the chief decides the price to be paid, and his judgment is irrevocable.

He is veritably the lord and master, reminding one of the old autocratic feudal days. The village educational, religious, and industrial life is all under his dominion. He supports the village kuttab (small school), where the little boys sit on the floor, swaying their bodies in time with the chanting of the words of the Koran, which really mean nothing to them, but still it is better than playing all day in the dusty alleys, and too soon they will be compelled to watch the buffalo, or to help the men in the fields.

Within the harem is also a travellers' rest-room where Bedouin women who may be journeying from one part of the land to another may come and stay so long as they wish. The lower quarters of the part of the house occupied by my hostess were given over to servants' rooms, kitchen, and store-rooms, and a public dining-room for guests. Above were her private rooms, which consisted of a large entrance reception-room, a sitting-room, bed- and dressing-room, all furnished in European

fashion, except for the beautiful rugs upon the floors.

I stayed in the harem throughout the day with my hostess, and at night went to the guest-room in the selam-lik, where I found my husband, who had spent the time watching the work of the estate, or talking to the men in the outer guest-house, or, what he enjoyed, long gallops over the hard sands on the beautiful Arabian horse that his host had placed at his disposal. In all the time of our visit he did not see his hostess, nor was she mentioned to him in any way.

One morning my hostess, her Soudanese servant, who was so black that I could not tell where her black head-covering left off and her face began, and I went to call upon a Bedouin camp a few miles distant. As we drove over the very well made roads I found that all the distance was practically owned by the chief or the members of his family. The farms were most modern—in one place grain was being threshed by a steam thresher, and in another I saw a steam plough in operation. These modern machines looked queer beside the oxen that were being driven around and around over the grain to tread out the wheat. It was the seventh and the twentieth centuries side by side, and seemed incongruous.

As we came to the tents, an old lady came to meet us, dressed in a straight black gown, with a sash twisted around her waist, and a black handkerchief covering her hair, which was stained a bright red with henna.

She was most cordial, kissed our hands, and took us to a tent, which was at least twenty by thirty feet in size. Around the sides were piled rugs, and the beautiful hand-woven blankets that constitute a woman's riches. Fatima said to me, "When a woman has half a dozen of these blankets she is well-to-do. You see this old lady has at least thirty, she is rich." The floor was covered with rugs, and for our benefit some chairs had been found.

I sat down and looked at this charming home, never having imagined a tent could be so spacious. The flap was open on two sides, and a strong wind from the desert blew in, and it was cool, although a burning sun was beating upon it. Around the sides were draped the gaily coloured blankets, striped red and yellow and black. It looked like a stage setting. I asked if it was ordinarily so gaily decorated, and was told that when no guests were expected the rugs were piled away, the hangings folded, and more common everyday ones were used. Yet

even without its trappings it must have been an ideal home. There was space and air and no furniture to dust and arrange. They sat upon the rug-covered sand, and slept upon it, and the simple life was not a thing to be read about in books—they lived it.

A woman servant came in with a sweetened drink, something with rosewater in it. The hostess left the tent, coming back with a bottle of perfume which she lavishly sprinkled over us, then a small brazier of sweet-smelling woods was lighted and soon the tent was filled with the fragrant smoke. Another drink was brought, then coffee with a touch of ambergris was served.

All the women of the village came in, and they were dressed practically the same as our hostess, except that some of the younger women had sashes of brighter colours. All had veils over their heads, but their faces were not covered, all were tattooed on the chin and neck (the younger generation are not doing this), all had nose-rings, and, what amused me immensely, all wore high-heeled French slippers. One could see they were donned for company and cherished at other times, because not even the soles were soiled. The old lady did not make that concession to the European dress; she had on her

HOLDING A BEDOUIN BABY.

bare feet an enormous pair of heelless slippers which were left at the entrance of the tent when she entered it. The women were covered with jewellery: in their ears were big crescent-shaped rings, and upon their breasts necklace upon neckace of heavy gold. They were very good-looking, held themselves superbly, were not at all self-conscious nor awkward, and showed a true courtesy and kindness that is not surpassed by the Western woman of society.

We were urged to dine with them, and they were most indignant that we would not at least take one meal with them, but we were far from home and felt we must not be abroad too late. We visited the other tents. They were smaller, in some it was impossible to stand upright except in the centre, but they were all cool, and gave one the impression of space and air. In one was a young baby wrapped in a cloth around which was twined many times a camel's-hair cord, only the tiny head and feet being visible. I took him in my arms and his big black eyes stared at me blinkingly for a time, and then the little face broke into the tiny wrinkles that meant laughter, and he crowed and laughed at the funny foreign woman who held him so awkwardly. There were many children, some with no clothes at

all, some with just a little blue shirt that barely covered their brown bodies. They were clean and healthy looking, a far better type than the average Egyptian child one sees in the streets of the cities.

In every tent was hung a gun, as robbers are an ever-present evil in the desert. There were also an enormous army of fierce, bristling dogs, that are used to guard the tents at night. In fact no one can approach a Bedouin encampment without being met by these fierce canine police.

Our hostesses accompanied us a distance along the road, and kissed our hands and begged us to come again, assuring me that "My tent is your home, come to it at any time." Their hospitality is not prefunctory, it seemed to come from the heart. They did not seem to have acquired that Western insincerity of manner that makes the social life of the Occident a matter of form without any reality in it. I asked, when driving home, how much was meant by their kindly, pressing invitation to come to them, and was told that at any time, if I went there, I would be made welcome, a sheep would be immediately killed in my honour, the very best would be placed before me, and the whole tribe would unite to make my stay as pleasant as possible. My hostess said to me, "It was typical of Bedouin

EN ROUTE TO THE DESERT.

hospitality when Abraham, the great man of your sacred story, seeing the three strangers, had his wife immediately make cakes and a servant kill the tender and good calf for their dinner, even before he knew who they were."

Within a few miles of the home of our host was a Bedouin camp entirely untouched by civilization. Its women were more free and their customs were not contaminated by proximity to Egyptian neighbours as was the camp we had lately visited. It was necessary to go there by camel. I had seen many camels while in the desert country, and I often wandered to the camel quarters of our Bedouin host. This animal seems to belong by right to a circus and not to a special sort of inn set apart for him. They were kept in a great courtyard, where some were always being loaded for their journeys into the desert, others wandered about biting and growling and looking as if for them life was a disappointment and the world most drear.

Of all cantankerous beasts a camel is the most noteworthy, especially when you try to establish friendly relations with him. He puts up his upper lip and tries to bite you with great yellow teeth that sadly need the dentist's care, or he wobbles his head around and glares at you, wondering why

you intruded upon his privacy, until you casually look for the doorway. When he is made to kneel, he groans and gurgles and generally shows his disapproval. To make him rise it takes a man of patience to cluck at him and talk to him and beat him over the knees, before he suddenly, and much to the astonishment of the person upon his back, rises on his hind legs and tips his passenger forward upon his neck, then unjoints his hind legs and tips him back again. Miss Amelia B. Edwards, in her *Thousand Miles up the Nile,* describes the temper of the camel with extreme fidelity to facts:

"The camel has his virtues, so much at least must be admitted; but they do not lie upon the surface. My Buffon tells me, for instance, that he carries a fresh-water cistern in his stomach; which is meritorious. But the cistern ameliorates neither his gait nor his temper—which are abominable. Irreproachable as a beast of burden, he is open to many objections as a steed. It is unpleasant, in the first place, to ride an animal which not only objects to being ridden, but cherishes a strong personal antipathy to his rider. Such, however, is his amiable peculiarity. You know that he hates you, from the moment you first walk around him, wondering where and how to begin the ascent of

his hump. He does not, in fact, hesitate to tell you so in the roundest terms. He swears freely while you are taking your seat; snarls if you but move in the saddle; and stares you angrily in the face if you attempt to turn his head in any direction save that which he himself prefers. Should you persevere, he tries to bite your feet. If biting your feet does not answer, he lies down.

"Now the lying down and getting up of a camel are performances designed for the express purpose of inflicting grievous bodily harm upon his rider. Thrown twice forward and twice backward, punched in his 'wind' and damaged in his spine, the luckless novice receives four distinct shocks, each more violent and unexpected than the last. For this execrable hunchback is fearfully and wonderfully made. He has a superfluous joint somewhere in his legs, and uses it to revenge himself upon mankind. His paces, however, are more complicated than his joints and more trying than his temper. He has four: a short walk, like the rolling of a small boat in a choppy sea; a long walk which dislocates every bone in your body; a trot that reduces you to imbecility; and a gallop that is sudden death."

Yet, after reading all this, and seeing the pained

looks of my friends, I was determined to add this new sensation to my collection of experiences. I decided to ride a camel. In my younger days I had seen a circus procession with a fair and beauteous Queen of the Harem seated upon a red and gold daïs placed aloft on a snow-white camel's back, and it had filled my soul with an ambition. Now a good and kind Providence had placed me in juxtaposition to a real camel, and I could fulfil that ambition.

In the early morning a camel was brought to the doorway. I walked around him and examined him closely. He smiled at me with his hare-lip, which, if tales are true, he obtained legitimately. When Allah created the first camel, he was lonely and went around moaning and groaning over his fate. It was then that the sour, dissatisfied look came to his face that is a distinguishing mark of all camels. Allah became sorry for him, seeing what a fine disposition was being ruined, so he sent a genie to tell him that a spouse was being created for him. The news delighted the lonely camel so intensely that he smiled and smiled until he split his lip, and it has remained thus ever since.

This camel was a true ship of the desert, and perched high on his back was an Arabic saddle of

MAKING FRIENDS WITH A CAMEL.

red leather, beautifully embroidered. I mounted and was heaved upward, and when I felt that I would soon touch the pale blue cloud that floated in the sky, not so very far above me, I groped madly for a place to rest my feet. There was no place. My dangling feet were supposed to rest upon the camel's neck, where the hair was worn off by the feet of a few generations of riders who had used it for a stirrup. I was not long enough and my toes barely touched his callouses. The saddle swayed and moved, and I clung to the pommel and swayed and moved with it, now forwards, now backwards, now sideways and then all ways at once.

My friends mistook my looks of fear and misery for expressions of delight called forth by the novel sensation of riding a camel. It took time to make them understand that I wished to descend from this elongated, swaying precipice, as I dared not loosen my grip to gesticulate. Finally I was removed by piecemeal, as it seemed to me, and I sat upon the ground and meditated upon the folly of trying to ride upon an Arabian saddle. One must be born to it, as it is not an art that can be acquired in one generation. I found that a saddle made of two feed bags, thrown around the camel's hump, a carpet covering them to give the artistic touch,

two pieces of sticks to grip tightly when the upheavals commence, made the proverbial rocking chair a thing to be scorned.

We went out into the desert in the early morning. The brown sands stretched around us, with only a few tents in the distance to make the desolation less drear. From pictures one has the idea that the desert is a flat stretch of sand, a brown, smooth surface stretching away to the horizon. In point of fact, it is all low hills and mounds, revealing the action of the winds on the shifting sand. Yet to me it is maddening in its monotony. It is always the same, with nothing to be seen unless by chance, outlined against the sky-line, a train of camels with their load of dates, may be passing, or the lone camel with his Arab rider, his body moving forwards and backwards with the ugly strides of his racer, his eyes staring straight ahead, his gun across his knees, his face seemingly as emotionless and as fixed as the sands over which he rides, hurrying to his home under one of the black tents seen in the distance.

It is said the Arab is not a creator, that the man of the desert adds nothing to the world in the shape of art, literature, or science. Perhaps it is because of the sameness of these deserts where he

lives, in which there is nothing to call forth the imagination.

After three hours' ride we came to the camp. These Bedouin homes, with their low, brown or black tents made of camel's-hair, are most picturesque. They fit into the landscape and become a part of the dreariness around them. They are so low that it is impossible to stand upright in the average one, even at the ridgepole. They boast of no furniture at all. A few baskets and jars in which the clothing and stores are kept, a camel-hair rope across one end on which the clothing in everyday use is suspended, some mats and rugs around the edges complete the furnishing of a Bedouin home. There are no beds. At night a mat is spread upon the sand, the tent-flap, serving for a door, is drawn, the family wrap themselves a little tighter in their long cloaks and sleep, father, mother, and children all together. There is no such word as privacy in the Bedouin vocabulary. Their one great blessing is the wonderfully clear air, and, if they leave the desert and go to the city, they easily fall a prey to lung diseases and are ready victims of the Great White Plague.

We ate with our new friends, sitting upon the sand on which had been spread a beautiful rug, made

by the women. The meal consisted mainly of mutton, cooked with a few vegetables, all emptied into a big dish, placed in the centre of our circle. We picked the morsel we wished from the general dish, with our fingers, placed it upon the round, flat cake that served as both bread and plate, and I tried to convey it to my mouth as gracefully as I could without accidents on the way. The Arabs eat most daintily, using only the thumb and first and second fingers of the right hand, never by chance touching any article of food with the left hand, which is supposed to be unclean. After the meal, water was poured over the hands from a goolah, a porous earthen water-jar, the scraps were thrown to the hungry dogs, and delicious coffee was served.

The women of the encampment came and went as freely as the men. They had fine physiques and carried themselves beautifully. They were dressed practically the same as the women I had seen before, straight, dark dresses, with the many coloured sash, back hair braided with coins, heavy ear-rings, necklaces of gold and silver, and ankles and wrists weighted down with bracelets and anklets. They were dark, but it looked like the brown of sun, and it is a wonder that they are not darker, exposed as they are to the burning sun.

CARRYING FAGGOTS.

While we were dining with the women, the chief dined with the men, and took the opportunity of transacting his business with the head men of the tribe. I found out afterwards that several men of the camp were going to the war in Tripoli. Some of the members of the tribe had been killed by the Italians, and their death must be avenged. Here in the desert a life must be given for one taken, an enemy is not forgiven until the debt is wiped out in blood.

There is a story told in the desert of how in the early days the missions made a convert from Mohammedanism, the only convert made among these tribes. In a blood feud a man was stabbed. He was not killed, but lingered several days at the home of a friend, where a missionary made regular visits. While sick and lonely, he allowed the missionary to tell him about the new faith, and before his death he sent word to his tribe that they must not carry on the feud, and asked the news of his forgiveness to be carried to his slayer. This was so astonishing that neither the man who killed him nor his tribe could believe it, and secretly the enemy decided to find out what could have caused this unheard-of thing, the forgiveness of a blood debt. He learned of a religion that says, "Forgive your

enemies," and became their only convert to Christianity.

Here in an Eastern country one can understand many things that were mere words when read to us or told us from the pulpits in our churches. When living here among a people who believe in an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, we can realize what a wonderful thing it was for the Christ who was Himself an Oriental, to say, " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

We returned home when the sun was setting and saw the castle as in a glory of golden radiance. Its white roofs and green palm-trees against the crimson and gold of the sky made a never-to-be-forgotten picture. We, on our camels, might have been of the time of Abraham, but, to make us realize that we were of the twentieth century, we saw far in the distance, hurrying to be in the city before darkness overtook them, a party of English officials in a big French touring-car.

In the early evenings, when the blaze of the tropical sun was gone and the night wind that always heralds the setting sun had come to cool the burning sands, we sat on the verandah of the harem behind the enclosing moushrabeah and watched the life that passed just outside the walls of the compound. I

saw the stately camels with the loads of grain upon their backs, and perhaps a fuzzy little one trying to keep near his mother; saw the children drive home the cattle; watched the little boys riding the water buffaloes until they came to the canal, then spring off their backs to allow them to wallow in the water that is a necessity to these ugly animals; saw the shepherds come in with their sheep, sometimes carrying a new-born lamb in their arms,—all the life of the East that seems to be the living pictures of the Bible scenes we looked at in our old family Bible. At night strange men rode up on their horses and descended at the rest-house. They all carried guns, and looked as if they might be Senoussis who made so much trouble in Tripoli.

We saw the men at prayer in the fields, sitting by the roadside bending, bowing, kneeling, utterly oblivious of the world that passed them by. My hostess and I had long talks in the moonlight, sitting in the blessed breeze that makes life possible in the desert, or we sat around the low brass tray that served as table, when we dined, discussing the many things that are of interest to women, from whatever part of the world they may come.

We dined alone, her husband remaining in the

selam-lik. It would not be polite for him to dine with her if she had a guest, even one who was not a Mohammedan and forbidden for him to look upon. More conservative men, she told me, never dine with their wives, but often a husband, if he has no guests, will take his meals with his family. The custom of women being alone at least gave freedom, and offered me an opportunity to understand my hostess, as she dared talk more freely of the life of an Egyptian woman than she would have if restricted by the presence of a man.

I found her not at all my idea of an Eastern woman, shut within the prison walls of a harem. She had had the opportunity of education in a European school, read papers, magazines, and books. She took a keen intelligent interest in all the life of Egypt, especially the political questions of the day. She was also a devout Mohammedan and believed that the Koran held the key to all that was best in life. She was happy in her seclusion, and did not believe it was yet time for Egyptian women to come from out the harem.

She said the life of the woman of the Occident was not intended for the woman of the Orient. They differ in practically all respects, not only in regard to custom and tradition, but also in some inherent

quality that divides the two races, and gives them no common meeting ground. "We must be Orientals for all time; you must be Occidentals. You would not care to live our life; we must not try to follow your customs. You have your standard of womanhood; we have ours. They may differ in the details, but in the essentials they are the same: to be a good wife, a good mother, and always remember the name of Allah."

The time passed all too quickly, and soon the day came when I went to the harem for the last time, to say good-bye to my hostess. As I left her standing at the archway, the tears filled my eyes. Perhaps I was wrong, perhaps the sight of the wonderful desert from her closely shuttered windows was enough, perhaps the winds that came each evening with the setting of the sun brought her all the breath of the outside world that she wished, but it seemed to me that she ought to be one with a bigger life —that this clever, intelligent woman was too great to be shut within the walls of a harem.

I do not want to hold this woman up as a sample of the Bedouin woman. She was an exception, and a very great one. She was the only woman for miles around who could read or write; she was the only woman who had travelled, most of the Bedouin

women never leaving the camp to make even a short journey. The average Bedouin has not come in contact with the foreigner at all, has not acquired his virtues nor his vices. They have the simple virtues of a primitive people—kindliness, unfailing courtesy, and, most prominent of all, their ideal of absolutely unselfish hospitality, which to them "covers a multitude of lesser sins."

CHAPTER XII

THE EGYPTIAN WOMAN AND HER CHILDREN

"IN the children our parents return to us, in the children we live," is a saying in this country where the world seems to revolve around the child, especially the woman's world. To be childless is the greatest sorrow that can come to an Egyptian wife, and children, their tiny ills, their food, their education, and the interminable detailing of the petty happenings of the life of these rulers of the home, seem to be the all-important subject of conversation between Egyptian mothers.

Practically the first question asked a visitor, after salutations and inquiries after the health, is "How many children have you?" If the guest is blessed with a large family she is congratulated, and told she must be very happy. If compelled to admit that no little ones have come to lodge under her rooftree, she is looked at sadly, and the kindhearted hostess tries to keep the pity from her voice, as she

tells her that perhaps they will come by and by, or recommends some famous place of pilgrimage, or dilates upon the efficacy of a favourite charm. I was calling with a lady who gave the foolish answer that children would interfere with her travels. The ladies exchanged shocked glances with each other, and one turned to the seemingly, to them, abnormal woman and said, "Oh, travelling is pleasant, but not *necessary*, while children *are*," and they changed the subject.

This prayer for children that goes up from the heart of every Moslem woman is for sons. "Sons—give me sons," is the cry of all feminine Egypt. They say that the "threshold of a house weeps for forty days when a girl is born." As in all countries, a woman is not honoured until she bears a male child. The mother of daughters only may see herself put away for another wife, or she may be divorced, so to many mothers, in answer to the anxious query, "Have I borne a son or daughter?" the answer "Daughter" brings only despair and bitterness.

This love for boys is descended from the old tribal days, when the most valued possessions of a man were male heirs, men he could add to the fighting strength of his tribe. As for the girl, it is

YOUNG EGYPT.

her destiny on reaching womanhood to go to a new home, and live in submission to her new parents, her entire efforts being to further the interests of her husband's people. Family life has been from time immemorial the foundation of all Egyptian life, and the interest of the family is always greater than that of the individual. It is the son who preserves the family by carrying on the name, and by bringing his wife to the father's house, perpetuates that first environment of the human soul—the home.

Yet, with this love for the boy predominating, the better class observe practically the same ceremonies on the birth of a girl as they do for the boy. When the child is seven days old, a feast is given to which all relatives and friends are invited. Presents are brought for the mother and the new arrival. The midwife shares in the general rejoicing, and is the recipient of gifts of money, and food and money are distributed to the poor, who seem instinctively to know when special rejoicings are to take place. The children of the family and of the near relatives hold lighted candles, and sing a special birth-song, as the baby is carried from room to room to accustom it to the house. Among the Bedouins a sheep is slain, but no special feast is prepared, nor are friends invited.

The Egyptian mother is guided to a great extent in the treatment of her children by the laws laid down in the Koran, as Mohammed made a great many general rules for the rearing of the child. He commands that the mother should nurse the child two years, and in return he enjoins upon man kindness to his mother. He says, "Moreover we have enjoined on man to show kindness to his parents. With pain his mother beareth him, with pain she bringeth him forth, and his bearing and his weaning is thirty months." He also said that the child should be ordered to say his prayers at seven years of age, and to beat him if he did not do so at ten years.

In the houses of the rich the child, whether boy or girl, remains almost constantly confined within the harem. The daughter practically never leaves the women's apartments until her marriage, unless, as is becoming the custom, especially in the city, she is allowed to go to school. The boy, when he is seven, either has masters to commence his education or is sent to some institution of learning such as the native kuttab; or perhaps now a Government school.

The treatment of children by all classes of women is remarkable for its excessive indulgence. From

A YOUNG EGYPTIAN GIRL.

the standpoint of a person of the West nearly all small Egyptian children are exceedingly spoiled. Yet, to a certain extent, respect to parents is innate, and disobedience is classed as one of the greatest of sins. The respect is shown more towards the father than the mother, and for the fathers who follow the Turkish style of education for their sons, a certain amount of formality is shown in their attitude towards each other. A son of one of Turkish descent would never sit in his father's presence unless invited, nor would he eat with his father except upon special invitation. He is supposed to stand when his father passes, and to kiss his hand in the morning or when he returns from a journey. These customs are followed by the better-class conservative Egyptians of to-day. I have a woman friend between whose father and herself is a very deep affection and camaraderie, yet she always rises when he enters the room, and remains standing until he tells her to be seated, and she respectfully kisses his hand when he arrives, and leaves her home.

The only children one sees in the streets are those of the very poor, who are generally dirty and in rags, and nearly all children of the lower classes have some form of eye trouble, owing mainly to ignorance on the part of the mother. Water is believed to be

most injurious to the eyes, a new-born child not being washed for from eight to forty days after birth, and in some places, if either the father or mother is suffering with any form of skin disease, a bath is considered fatal. The flies are allowed to rest upon the baby's eyes, and it is one of the most pitiful sights in Egypt to see the helpless little one trying to peer through the swarms of flies that cover its tiny face.

It is absolutely a survival of the fittest, and one often marvels that any children live at all. Yet the mortality is very great, some going so far as to say that 65 per cent. of the babies born to Egyptian mothers die before they are three years old. A great landowner told me that on his estate nearly every woman had been the mother of from twelve to fifteen children, but that only three or four of them had survived. No judgment is used in regard to their food. At the time when melons are in season, the death tale of the children increases to an alarming extent. They are allowed to eat what they like, and as much as they like.

Lord Kitchener has issued thousands of little tracts instructing mothers in the treatment of children in the time of the great heat. An Egyptian lady laughed when told of this, saying, " Who will

CHILDREN FROM A VILLAGE SCHOOL.

read it to the mothers ? Lord Kitchener should send a town crier with each bundle of leaflets." I asked if the father could not read it to the mother ? She said, " The fathers, that is of the Fellaheen class where these tracts are needed, are as ignorant as the mothers. The ones who have education enough to read the tracts do not need them, as they know that babies should not eat melons and cucumbers in the time of the great heat." But I am afraid that her view was coloured by her dislike of anything that the English Government might do, as she was an ardent advocate of " Egypt for the Egyptians."

Yet the peasant baby seems to thrive, at least to all outward appearances. One sees him toddling about all day among the poultry and the goats, as naked as when he received the doubtful blessing of life, or sitting astride his mother's shoulders as she goes to and from the canal. When he reaches the age of seven, if he is not sent to school, he goes with his sisters to shepherd the goats or cattle, or out into the fields armed with a sling to frighten the birds from the crops, or joins in the work of the farm. Within a few years he is the tall straight young man that one watches working the shadoof along the water-side, or, if he has " been cursed with ambition," he may be one of the students in

the Government schools that are springing up all over Egypt for this especial class of Egyptian youth.

Any way, with all her handicaps of climate and ignorance, Egypt shows that she is a land of wondrous fertility where babies are concerned, and if left without war or oppression, her increase in population is marvellous. In the twelfth century Egypt had a population of 18,000,000. At the beginning of the nineteenth century her people only numbered 2,000,000. These seven centuries were years of foreign invasion and ruthless despotism. From the nineteenth century to the twentieth, that is in the last one hundred years of comparative peace and prosperity, her population has grown from 2,000,000 to 12,000,000.

CHAPTER XIII

SUPERSTITION

THE Egyptians are very superstitious, indeed superstition might almost be called the religion of feminine Egypt. Many of their superstitions form a part of their religion and are sanctioned by the Koran.

No Egyptian women, unless a few of the very advanced modern women, but are believers in good or bad fairies or, as they call them, "ginns." These ginns are said to have been made before the world, and are capable of assuming any form they desire. They inhabit the ground, the rivers, wells, ruined houses, baths, and ovens. In fact they may be found nearly everywhere and must be considered in every act of the daily life. For example, a peasant woman before she threw her water in which she had washed her dishes upon the ground would say "Destoor," that is, she asks permission or begs the pardon of the "ginn" who might happen to choose that particular place for his temporary abiding

place. Also, when she lets a bucket down into a well, or lights the fire, or puts the bread into the oven, she says the same thing, quite likely adding, "May God protect thee from all evil spirits."

Many of the desert Arabs believe that a "ginn" rides in the whirlwind which they so often see sweeping across the sands of the desert. What we call a falling star is commonly believed to be a dart thrown by God at an evil genie, and an Egyptian woman will say, "May God transfix the enemy of the faith." Evil spirits are prone to come into the house at night, so the person who locks the door says, "In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful." The laundry woman in Cairo used to murmur over the folding of the clothes, and, on asking her what she said, I found she repeated a little formula so that nothing with evil intent should find a resting-place within my folded linen, as she liked me and did not wish me harm.

Like the Chinese the Egyptians believe that evil spirits station themselves upon the rooftree of the home, but they do not go so far to counteract the bad effect of the spirits as do the Chinese, who point the ends of the roof, causing the "ginns" to fall from their up-curving cornices as they try to find an entrance into the house.

Many of the ignorant are great believers in ghosts. At the time of the removal of the mummies from the tombs of the kings in Thebes to Cairo, the natives feared to go out on the roads at night because of the wailing of the spirits who were being disturbed from their sleep of centuries. Also in Cairo when the mummies were being removed to the new building which now houses them, the natives said it was impossible to sleep for many nights after the removal, because of the frightened wailing of the spirits who had been abroad at the time of the removal of the cases and could not find their resting-places upon their return.

But superstition in regard to mummies is not confined to Eygptians. I am told that there appeared in the *Egyptian Gazette*, the leading English newspaper of Egypt, a letter from an Englishman, who stated that, while standing in front of the mummy of a certain Queen of Egypt, he made a remark not complimentary to her looks. Instantly he was seized by the throat by an invisible hand and nearly choked to death before he was taken away by an attendant, who thought the man subject to epilepsy. There is in the Museum in London, according to popular belief, a mummy whose influence is so deleterious to all who look

upon her that she has been removed to the storage rooms, where she may exercise her baneful influence without harm to others.

Indeed, I have heard students of Egyptology say that they believed there was some shadow of truth in the popular belief that the spirits of these mummies had not yet arisen above the earth they loved so well. They tied their souls to the world they had quitted with the material things with which they had been surrounded while in life. They were brought foods, their clothing was buried with them, images of their servants were placed in their tombs, their camels and horses were sacrificed to accompany them on their journey to the unknown land, and their relatives made pilgrimages to their burial places to communicate with them. In fact, they were attached by most visible cords to their former life, and no wonder it were impossible to break their earthly fetters.

Above the belief in "ginns" and ghosts, is the belief in the good spirits called "wellees." The king of them is a being called a Kutb whose usual place of residence is on the roof of the Kaaba or holy place of Mecca. He is invisible and can pass instantly through the air, and often comes to one of his favourite stations in Cairo behind one

leaf of the great wooden door of the gate of Bab Zuweyleh. It is a favourite place for the sick, as it is believed that a nail driven into the door will heal certain forms of illness, and that an extracted tooth tied to the doorway will ensure a person against the toothache. The doorway is generally covered with pieces of cloth torn from the garments of persons wishing the aid of the Kutb. This good spirit wanders throughout the whole world, among persons of every religion, assuming their dress and manners and customs, distributing through the agency of his subordinate "wellees" blessings and the awards of virtue.

Many Moslems say that Elias or Elijah was the Kutb of his time. They say he has never died, having drank of the fountain of Youth. We read in the Bible of his translation, of his being transported from place to place by the Spirit of God, of his investing Elisha with miraculous powers, and of the subjection of other prophets to him. Kings I. is quoted as proof that he was a Kutb:

"And it will come to pass as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of Jehovah will carry thee, I know not whither."

Guardian angels are believed to watch over the actions of every Mohammedan. The Koran says:

" Each hath a succession of angels before him and behind him who watch over him by God's bequest." These guardians are again mentioned in the holy book of Islam :

" Supreme over his servants he sendeth forth guardians who watch over you until when death overtaketh any one of you our messengers take his soul and fail not."

The two most important angels that go through life with the Mussulman are the recording angels. The one at the right shoulder records in the Book of Life the good deeds committed, and the one at the left shoulder places on the white page the evil acts of the wayfarer. A woman remembers these angels in every detail of her daily work. She would not throw anything unclean over her right shoulder, nor would she touch an unclean thing with her right hand. The right side is more sacred than the left side, and on entering a mosque the right foot is put over the threshold before the left.

The guardian angels not only follow one through life, but they go to the grave with the true believer. They visit the body the first night after interment and cause it to sit up, then whisper in its ear, " What dost thou worship ? " and the dead must answer, " I worship God." Then the query is made, " What

is thy religion?" and the answer is, "I profess Islam," and to the third, "Who is the Prophet?" the response is whispered, "My Prophet is Mohammed," and then the soul is left in peace until it is transported to Paradise.

All over Egypt one sees little marabouts or tombs of holy men. These are visited by women especially who ask the intercession of these men. It is not believed that they are an intermediary between oneself and God because one of the strongest tenets of the Mohammedan faith is the fact that each person may go to God direct. Yet because of the holy life led by these saints they are believed to have great influence. I have a friend whose sister-in-law has made a great many pilgrimages to different tombs, asking the blessing of a son. It has not been granted her, but she still believes, and when she hears of a saint who is noted for answering the prayers of women, she hurriedly departs for the place. Her cynical family say it is only an excuse for an outing, as she is a nervous, restless woman who chafes at the restricting walls of the harem, but they dare not openly express their disbelief in the piety that actuates such deeds, consequently the pilgrimages are made.

The Egyptian women are great believers in charms

worn upon the body, and naturally the greatest charm is a passage from the Koran. In the olden time nearly every devout Moslem wore a case in which some chapter of his Holy Book was enclosed, but now it is more rare. In the desert one sees the camel-drivers with this case hanging from a cord around their neck.

The ninety-nine names of God, containing all the names and epithets applied to the Ruler of the Universe, if written upon a paper and kept upon the body or in the house, are supposed to keep evil away from the person or the household. One sees these little charm-cases not only on the children and the women, but the donkey carries one around his neck, and the gentle cow that was driven past our door each night had a string of blue beads, with a little nickle box containing a verse of the Koran to guard her from whatever evil may befall a placid motherly cow.

The greatest fear and terror of the Egyptian mother, and one which haunts her throughout the youth of her children, is that caused by her implicit belief in the evil eye. Yet this belief in the power of the eye to cause danger to a loved one is not confined to an Egyptian mother. It is shared by the peasants of Italy, the women of India, and the

children of China run to the most secluded spot within the house to hide themselves from the malignant glance of the foreigner who may chance to be passing by.

The fear is not caused by ignorance, but is ingrained within the Egyptian character. I have talked with an intelligent man of the Sheikh class who has travelled and lived abroad, who has had the advantage of an education at Oxford, but who is a believer in the dread influence of the eye of an evil-wisher. He told me that he did not like any one to admire or look too intently at his children. If they did, something always happened to them. He had noticed it repeatedly, and, arguing from cause and effect, now fully believed it was caused by the sparks sent out from the human eye. I was talking to a young doctor who had recently graduated from the medical school in Cairo. He laughed at the superstition, which, he said, was confined to women, but, when later we were discussing the subject of vibrations in the air, he said that the eye sent out the most powerful vibrations, and could affect the person against whom the rays were directed either well or ill, according to the good or bad intention of the sender. Evidently, his medical education had not entirely destroyed

the belief that had been nurtured at his mother's knee.

A son to the Eastern woman is the greatest blessing that may be sent her, and in her fear that he may be coveted by less fortunate women, she perhaps dresses him like a girl or keeps him dirty and untidy so that his beauties may not appear. It is the same idea that causes the Chinese mother to pierce the left ear of her son and put a ring in it so that the jealous gods or the passing person will think him that undesired possession, a girl, and not take from her her treasure.

I visited in a Bedouin home where there were a great many children and naturally admired some of them. The lady who was interpreting for me said, " I did not tell the mother that you said the child was pretty. It would have frightened her so that she would have passed the rest of the night in making up charms to counteract the effect of your admiration." I asked what kind of charms she would use and she said, " Quite likely she would have cut a piece from the child's dress and at the setting of the sun when the sky was red burn the piece of cloth with some alum, and fumigate the child with the smoke." She may have sprinkled the floor thoroughly with salt after I left, as that

humble household necessity is a great corrector of evil intentions when scattered with the proper prayers murmured over it.

During the first ten days of the month of Moharram the women buy a mixture of various ingredients which are supposed, when mixed according to a set formula, to be a great charm against the evil that may come to the most well-ordered household. During the year, if a child is threatened with an illness caused by some malign influence, a little of the mixture is thrown upon some burning coals and the child inhales the smoke.

Yet, as every one agrees, for every ill that flesh is heir to, the Koran is the chief remedy. Often the sick will get a holy man to write some words from out of the sacred book upon a piece of paper, place it in a basin of water until the ink disappears, then drink the water. The words most often used are " And he will heal the breasts of the people who believe," or " Oh men, how hath an admonition come to you from your Lord and a remedy for what is in your breasts? " or " When I am sick he healeth me."

The Egyptians of the lower classes suffer from eye trouble, it being said that 96 per cent. of the population of Egypt are afflicted in greater or less

degree with this trouble. There are many charms for it. One of the old beliefs was that a piece of dried mud taken from near Boulac in the outskirts of Cairo, and carried to the opposite bank of the river, would relieve the sufferer. A person afflicted with a sty should go to seven different houses and beg a piece of bread from seven different women by the name of Fatima. The bread thus obtained, when made into a little ball and rubbed upon the sty, is a certain cure. Others say it is not so efficacious as to walk in silence around seven tombs before sunrise, when the sty will gradually disappear.

I have seen a baby with eighteen amulets tied on different parts of its tiny body to cure its eyes, which were nearly gone from filth and lack of care. For a child who cannot walk some Egyptian mothers believe that if the feet are tied together with a palm-leaf knotted three times, and the mother and child station themselves in front of a mosque and request the first, second, and third persons leaving the doorway to untie each one a knot, it will cause the child to walk. It is only a question of time quite likely when the charm will prove effective, and the mother will be again assured that her gods are working in her behalf.

It is also thought most unlucky to sneeze once, and the person to whom this calamitous accident happens will try to force another, especially if starting upon a journey or commencing some new work; as this one lonely sneeze would be taken as a warning that the trip would end unhappily or the work would be unsuccessful. Yet, this little paroxysm is not always considered unfortunate, especially if it be the other person who sneezes. If a woman has a very ardent desire in mind, and meets a person who sneezes, the desire will be granted without delay.

There is a pretty superstition, or rather legend, connected, as so many things in Egypt are, with the River Nile. It is believed that in midsummer a drop of dew of marvellous power is elaborated in the remotest regions of heaven and falls down, always on the same night, called the Night of the Dew, into the Nile, which is at once impregnated and brings forth the annual inundation. If watched for closely this drop may be seen shooting down like a star to the river. On this night some superstitious families number themselves and make a little representation of each member of their family in clay or dough. (This must have come to the Egyptians before the advent of Islam, because

Mohammed forbade the making of images.) The object of the ceremony is to see who will live and who will die. If the image remains smooth and entire the omen is fatal, but if it cracks, as it always does, a good old age is promised. Maidens do this, wishing to know whether their husbands will be rich or poor, young or old.

Charms play an important part in the life of all Mohammedans. I have an English friend whose lack of children is a source of great anxiety to her Moslem friends. One day, when visiting an old white-haired gentleman and his wife, they solemnly gave her a present, the most precious they could bestow. It was a small piece of sheepskin about four inches wide by ten inches long, on which were written in gold the different names of Allah, along with a short prayer in connection with each name. They begged her to bind it upon her husband's arm, then upon her arm, and afterwards upon the arms of the child that would surely come to bless her. They told innumerable instances of its power when worn to guard the wearer from harm. For example, their eldest son was in Chicago, and one night he intended going to a theatre with a party of American friends, and, hurriedly dressing, he forgot his precious charm and left it upon the table.

When remembering it he was nearly to the theatre, but he returned to get the talisman which had been his guardian for so many years, and when he arrived at the theatre he found it burned. It was the fatal Iroquois theatre fire, in which all of his party had perished.

To add to the many superstitions and fears that are the heritage of the Egyptian woman, is the belief in dreams. Her dreams are remembered, and she will often adjust her day to accord to some dream that she considers a warning. If she should dream of something with the number seven in it, or dream of seeing seven people or things it would be most fortunate, as seven is the lucky number in Egypt. She also has her lucky and unlucky days. Friday, because it is the Mohammedan Sabbath, the day on which Adam was created, the day on which the general resurrection is promised, is a day most blessed, but it would be a most courageous woman who would start on a journey or cut into a new piece of cloth on Saturday, the most unfortunate day of the week.

These are only a few of the superstitions and fears that surround the Egyptian wife and mother. They will quite likely dominate her until the newer education trains her mind to think and reason;

then she will pick the gold from the dross, and life will be less fearful for her than at present, because ignorance and superstition go hand in hand, and one can only be eliminated by the acquiring of the other. Yet, I think superstition will never be quite free from the mind of the woman of Egypt, because she is an Oriental, and it seems to be bred in the blood of these Eastern people to see signs in the heavens, where we of colder blood see only a floating cloud.

CHAPTER XIV

RELIGION

THE Egyptian woman is a follower of either the Mohammedan or the Coptic religion. By far the greater number are Mohammedans, as 10,000,000 from the 12,000,000 inhabitants of Egypt claim Mohammed as their Prophet. The faith is called "El Islam," which words, literally translated, mean "to deliver the face to God" or to turn to God only in worship and prayer to the exclusion of all other worship.

Coupled with the proposition that God is One and there is no God but God, is the law "Mohammed is the Messenger of God." This Prophet of Arabia, who is believed in so implicitly by his followers, was born near Mecca, Arabia, A.D. 570. His father died a few months before his birth, and his mother in his early childhood. He was taken into the home of his grandfather, and later into that of his uncle, Abu Talit, the chief of the Koreishites, the ruling

tribe of Mecca. Mohammed, when a young boy, as most all Eastern children, tended the sheep and goats of his people. As he grew older he went on trading trips with the men of the tribe to Syria and other countries adjacent to Mecca.

At the age of twenty-five, after conducting a successful caravan trip for Khadijah, a rich widow fifteen years his senior, he married her, and through her wealth attained a position of importance and leadership in the community.

He passed an uneventful life until the age of forty, when he began to have visions and communications, as he believed, from God. He communicated them to his wife, who believed them and in him. Carlyle says, "If there had been no Khadijah there would have been no Islam," as her belief in him gave him confidence in himself and his message.

He made few converts, and the few were persecuted so bitterly that they fled to Abyssinia, seeking refuge with the Christian king of that country. The words of the leader of these first disciples of Mohammed give an idea of the belief he inspired amongst his followers, and the purity of his mission:

"Oh King, we lived in ignorance, idolatry, and

THE THREE ATTITUDES OF PRAYER.

unchastity; the strong oppressed the weak; we spoke untruth; we violated the duties of hospitality. Then a Prophet arose, one whom we knew from our youth, with whose descent and conduct and good faith and truth we are well acquainted. He told us to worship one God, to speak the truth, to keep good faith, to assist our relations, to fulfil the rights of hospitality, and to abstain from all things impure, ungodly, unrighteous. And he ordered us to say prayers, give alms, and to fast. We believed in him. We followed him."

The cause of the persecution of Mohammed was easily traced, as Mecca was the centre of a pilgrimage for people from all parts of Arabia who came there to worship the many gods that were in the Kaaba and to kiss the sacred black stone that was believed to have fallen from heaven. The prosperity of the town depended upon the pilgrimages, and a teaching that there was but one God and that the other gods were useless was considered as treason. Mohammed for a time was protected by the power of his uncle, but his uncle died and a plot was made to kill him. In desperation he learned that he must fly for his life, and in the year 622, with one companion, he fled to Yathrib, afterward called Medina. From this flight or the Year of the Hegira,

as it is called, the Mohammedans date their calendar.

At Mecca Mohammed was a preacher and a prophet; at Medina he became a warrior, and was so successful that within ten years (he died in 632) he had subjugated Mecca and the surrounding country, and so inspired his followers that within one hundred years of his death they were masters of an empire greater than Rome at the height of its power. They were building mosques in China, in Spain, Persia, Southern India, and Northern Africa. The name of Mohammed, coupled with that of the Almighty, was called out from ten thousand minarets five times daily from the Persian Gulf to the Atlantic.

The text-book of El Islam is the Koran. It is believed to be literally God's revelation to Mohammed through the Angel Gabriel. The language of the Koran, Arabic, is God's language and must not be translated. Its eloquence is supposed to be miraculous. Being the latest law direct from God it is an infallible guide to conduct, and it abrogates all other holy books. The Mohammedans reverence Moses, Abraham, Noah, Adam, Christ, and Mohammed as the six greatest prophets, and believe that each received a revealed law of God. They say the Gospels, the Songs of David, and the

Pentateuch are of Divine origin, but have been so much altered that very little of the true Word of God is in them. The Koran, on the contrary, can suffer no alteration whatsoever. The Mohammedans believe that Christ was born of a virgin by the miraculous operation of God, without any natural father, but *not* that he is a Son of God. Mohammed says:

"The Messiah, Jesus, Son of Mary, is only an apostle of God, and His Word, which He conveyed unto Mary and a Spirit proceeding from Himself. Believe in God and His Apostles, and say not Three (there is a Trinity). God is one God. Far be it from His Glory that He should have a son."

The Koran teaches that after Christ had fulfilled His mission and given His message He was taken up unto God, and another person, on whom God had stamped the likeness of Christ, was crucified in His place. In speaking of the unbelief of the Jews, Mohammed says:

"Nay, but God hath sealed them up for their unbelief, so that few believe. And for their unbelief, and for their having spoken against Mary a grievous calumny, and for their saying 'Verily we have slain the Messiah, Jesus the Son of Mary, an apostle of God.' Yet they slew Him not, but

they had only His likeness . . . but God took Him up to Himself."

The followers of Mohammed trace their descent from Abraham and call themselves the descendants of Ishmael. At Mecca the well Zem Zem is held sacred because it is from that well that God caused the water to flow which Hagar gave to the dying child. The Koran teaches that it was Ishmael who was to be sacrificed instead of Isaac, and who was saved by the intervention of God. At Mecca the sacrifice of the ram is still made to commemorate this event. When one visits the Bedouins in their tents, one can understand more fully their claim that they are the descendants of Ishmael. "God hath made the wilderness His home, and the barren steppes His dwelling. He scorns the riches of the city. He takes no heed of the driver's cry. He ranges the hills."

Authorities differ in regard to the position of woman before and after the time of Mohammed. Some say that her position was inferior, others that it was far superior than under Islam. Yet woman, according to many students of Moslem history, had a voice in the public questions of the day. It is said that she voted, and by the Prophet's approval, on questions of social interest. In the

biographies of Mohammed it is stated that a deputation of the "Owes and Khazrags," the two chief tribes of Medineh, came to Mohammed to express their approval of his political reign over them. The deputies elected by the two tribes were seventy men and two women.

In the "times of ignorance," that is before the time of Mohammed, the custom of female infanticide prevailed. This was due probably to poverty and war, which limited the number of males, so causing an excess in the number of females undesirable. Mohammed forbade the killing of girls under any circumstances. Polygamy was also practised, with practically no limit to the number of wives a man might marry. Mohammed limited this number to four, although he himself had during his lifetime thirteen wives. Mohammed did not believe in the equality of the sex. He says, "Men are superior to women on account of the qualities which God hath gifted one above the other, and on account of the outlay they make from their substance for them." He believed in the chastisement of wives: "But chide those whose refractoriness ye have cause to fear. Remove them into beds apart and *scourge them.*" In another place he says, "But not one of you must whip a wife like whipping a slave."

He warns his followers from having over much confidence in women and entrusting them with property. "Beware, make not large settlements on women." A woman's value can be calculated mathematically. If a wife dies, her husband can inherit one-half of her property if there are no children. But if the husband dies, his widow only receives a quarter of his property, and if there are children, one-eighth. If there are several wives, this eighth part must be divided amongst them. A daughter has one-half the portion of a son. It takes the testimony of two women to equal that of a man, and in the olden time, when blood was accepted as the price of a life, only half was needed to pay for the death of a woman as was demanded for that of a man.

There is an economic reason at back of this lack of value placed upon woman's life, especially in the time of Mohammed. It was a time of tribal warfare, and men were at a premium. The existence of the tribe depended upon its fighting strength, and, as in all countries and among all people where war is necessary to protect their homes from the enemy, the non-combatants, such as the women and the aged, are not considered of as much importance as the men of fighting ability at the present, or the youth who will be the protectors in the future.

I asked the question of an Egyptian woman, "Is the Egyptian woman a good Moslem?" "She is a *real* Moslem, though the ignorant may know nothing except the first principles of El Islam." She also added "that the tenets of the religion and the prayers are taught much more thoroughly in the Moslem home than are the principles and teaching of Christ within the Christian home." The woman's devotional exercises all take place within the harem. She does not attend the mosque. The Prophet did not forbid it, but said that prayers from women were better said in private than in a public place. Women do not obey the call to prayer as strictly as do the men. For one thing the positions taken in prayer are very difficult, as there is a great deal of kneeling and bending. The Egyptian woman of the better class leads a sedentary life, eats rich foods, takes practically no exercise at all, and after the first flush of youth is past, her form is not adapted to the postures necessary for prayer. At the Moslem Congress it was suggested the women might attend the mosque.

The religion of Mohammed seems to be a man's religion, some even going so far as to say that there is no place provided in the heaven of El Islam for women. That cannot be sustained by the teaching of the Prophet, because he says:

"Truly the men who resign themselves to God, and the women who resign themselves, and the believing men and the believing women, and the devout men and the devout women, Allah hath prepared for them forgiveness and a rich reward."

In answer to my persistent inquiry as to the reward prepared for the women who had led faithful devout lives, a Mohammedan Sheikh or teacher said vaguely, "Oh, they have a place to themselves," and when I politely insisted that he should not be so general, but give me a more definite idea of this rather enlarged harem, he said, "Why, they have a comfortable place where they can sit around and talk and talk and talk." This seems to be as practical and material as are the future joys held out to the true follower of Mohammed. He is promised palaces of gold and silver, rich foods, rare wines, cooling streams, perfumes, luscious fruits, and beautiful houris to wait upon him. Yet it is wrong to take this description of the Moslem's heaven as literal, any more than we should take the revelation of St. John as literal. It is said by authorities to be simply a description of material joys which would appeal to the sense-loving Arab. He would not understand spiritual delights.

Mohammed taught that there was no preferment of one race or religion to another. The Koran says, "God will not forgive that His monotheism should be denied, but He will pardon anything else if He wills." It also says in another chapter, "The Moslems, the Christians, the Jews, any amongst these who have faith in God in the second world, and he who does good deeds, will not be sad nor frightened, and will be rewarded by God."

I asked an educated Egyptian woman, "What are the main advantages of Islam over any other faith—Christianity, for instance?" I give her answer as she wrote it down for me:

"El Islam is preferred by the Egyptians to all other faiths for many reasons:

1st.—It says that there is no God but one, and that shows the greatness and power of God more than saying that He is Three in One or One in Three.

2nd.—It works out according to thinking and logic. Mohammed did not spread it by any miracle or unnatural cause, but by discussion and thinking. His people and the other pagan Arabs told him that they would never believe except by a miracle, and yet he was ordered by the angel to answer that he was a man like others. That is quite the contrary of other faiths, which were first believed and

based on miracles and unnatural deeds beyond the usual power of man.

3rd.—It orders every Moslem to give to the poor. This eliminates the question of socialism and nihilism in Mohammedan lands, because the rich give of their plenty to those in poverty.

4th.—It orders every Mohammedan who can afford it to go on pilgrimage to Mecca, in order that all Moslems from all parts of the world should communicate and be brethren.

5th.—It gives more liberty to its followers than any other faith, viz. :

a. It orders that a woman should be quite free to manage and spend her own money as she likes, and her husband is forbidden to interfere with her business unless she gives him leave to do so.

b. It gives freedom to the married to divorce each other, if they find it impossible to live together in peace ; and divorce is given without courts or disgrace.

6th.—It contains nothing like " confession," and that means that all people are alike and that no one can efface the human sins except God.

7th.—It severely forbids monasticism because it is unnatural.

8th.—It gives strict orders for cleanliness and hygiene and it counts them as a necessary part of its faith."

My friend adds, "I do not say that all Mohammedans follow these precepts of our Prophet any more than all Christians follow the teaching of Christ, but they form the principle of the religion of El Islam as laid down in our sacred book."

In addition to the laws given above, an order was given all followers of El Islam to fast during the month of Ramadan. This fast continues for thirty days, during which period neither food nor drink shall be partaken of between sunrise and sunset. When this fast occurs in the summer months it is a very great tax upon the will-power of the working man or woman, especially in the matter of quenching the thirst, yet it is generally conceded that it is lived up to in almost every case. At the end of the fast a three days' celebration is allowed, when special almsgiving is enjoined.

This question of almsgiving is very great in all Moslem lands. One-twentieth of a man's income is to be given to charity, yet there are no organized charities in Egypt: no poor-houses, no homes for the aged, nor the sick, nor the insane. The individual person is helped, no thought seeming to be taken

of the causes nor of the people as a mass. The charity seems to be given more for the effect upon the giver, and because it is the custom to give at the time of festivities and funerals than because the recipient is a real object of pity. It is only lately that women seem to be awakening to their social obligations, regarding their less fortunate sisters, in activities other than the sending of food or the dropping of money into the outstretched hand. To-day, in Cairo, a band of generous women are carrying on a home for helpless women and babies, the patronesses of which are members of the well-known and influential families of Egypt.

There are certain prohibitory laws in the Koran affecting the moral and social conditions of the people. Wine and all intoxicating liquors, for example, are forbidden to the Moslem, while opium and all drugs are considered as unlawful, though these are not definitely mentioned in the Koran. The eating of swine's flesh is strictly forbidden, this being incorporated in an old Egyptian law of pre-Mohammedan times, rising no doubt out of the fact that pork is not healthful in a hot country. This feeling in relation to swine is even carried so far that the women refuse to allow foreign mattresses on their divans, fearing that they may be filled with

the hair of the animal which is tabooed by their religion.

All animals killed for food must be killed in a prescribed way, in a manner resembling the laws laid down by Judaism, which laws are seen coming out repeatedly in various Koranic injunctions. A formula is spoken over the animal before it is slain somewhat as follows, "In the name of God; God is most great." Women, when killing a chicken, often add the sentence, "God give thee patience to endure the affliction which He hath allotted thee."

Gambling and usury and all games of chance are prohibited by the laws of the Sacred Book. The Moslems showed their adherence to their faith in the most practical manner when, several years ago, the savings-banks were established by the Government and allowed a certain percentage of interest upon the money deposited. In the first two years 3,195 of the depositors refused to take their interest, as they considered it usury, which is explicitly forbidden in the Koran.

Indeed the Egyptian's attitude towards every phase of life is governed by his interpretation of the Koran. We were talking with a Sheikh one day, a man not only educated in Egypt, but having

spent several years in England, regarding the new wonderful inventions of the twentieth century, especially the automobile and the aeroplane. To our consternation he said that they were spoken of by Mohammed in the seventh century. Does he not say, "They shall be taken from place to place by animals and *other things*"?

But despite the varied interpretations of certain parts of the Koran by the followers of the Prophet, among the far-sighted and statesmanlike rules which he made were those relating to the pilgrimage to Mecca. Mohammed understood the love of the Oriental for a holy place to which he could look forward as a culmination to his life of piety, therefore he caused the journey to Mecca to be attended with great honour to the pilgrim. After this pilgrimage he was given the title of Hadj (which, in the words of Moslem divines, means "aspiration"); the pilgrim was allowed to wear a stripe of green in his turban as a mark of his religious triumph, and often the outside of his house is decorated with pictures revealing the perils and joys of the journey necessarily filled with impressive experiences to the Mohammedan who has never before left the banks of his River Nile. It is believed by many that a prayer said at Mecca

is equivalent to seventy thousand prayers repeated at any other place.

Women seldom make the pilgrimage, since heretofore it has been a long and tedious journey attended with many difficulties and dangers, to say nothing of its considerable expense. Since the introduction of the railway much of the obstacles of the pilgrimage have been overcome, and now one often hears of a widow or the wife of a wealthy man being allowed as a special favour to visit the holy place of her religion.

Mohammedanism has found at Mecca a common meeting-place where the passionate fire of religious zeal may be rekindled year by year, and the unity of a great world religion preserved. There the racial characteristics of the man from Java, the Indian, the Bedouin from the deserts of Morocco, the Turk, and the Persian are lost in the great thought of a common Islamic brotherhood, and from there the Moslems go forth with new impulse giving new meaning to their cry "There is no God but God, and *Mohammed is His Prophet.*"

Among the needs of his people at the time Mohammed received his inspiration for the Koran was the necessity for personal cleanliness. Perhaps he had an Arab rendering of the text "Cleanliness

is next to Godliness" when he enjoined upon his followers that before they prayed they should three times rinse the mouth, three times cleanse the ears, the nostrils, the face, the head, and the neck, then the right hand and arm to the elbow, and again the left, the right foot, and the left. Knowing that for the traveller crossing the desert with his caravan, water would be impossible to obtain, he prescribed the use of sand instead of the precious water.

It is hard to believe while reading the Koran and studying the laws laid down by Mohammed for his people, that he was a man utterly without education, but his followers are very proud of this fact, claiming that it is one of the proofs that the Koran was an inspired book. Of the Moslem Prophet it is said, as the Jews spoke of Christ, "How knoweth this man letters having never learned?"

Yet this unlettered man Mohammed dominates by his life and teaching 223,000,000 people in the Eastern world, in not only their religious life, but in each act of their daily living. He made laws for their courts that are in use to-day, and his regulations laid down in the seventh century are implicitly followed in the twentieth. He has made the Egyptian and the Turk, the Indian and the man

from Arabia raise their eyes to the same God. He taught them that to all true believers there is no caste, and has put the name of Allah upon the lips of every one constantly and always with reverence.

He considered blasphemy worthy of death. He said, "A person who blasphemes against God or Moses or Abraham or Christ or Mohammed or any prophet is to be put to death without delay, even though he repent. Infidelity or apostasy is occasioned by misjudgment, but blasphemy is the result of utter depravity."

Mohammed has made men proud of their religion, unashamed to spread their prayer-rug at the busy corner of the street, and to kneel and ask the blessing of their God. He has caused the ignorant Fellah in his field to stop his labour and, beside his waiting camel, to touch his head to the sands while he murmurs the name of Allah. It is this name that is whispered in the ear of the new-born child, it is the last word said to the dying; it is called five times a day from the minarets and mosques of every city and town where El Islam rules and claims Mohammed as the Prophet. At night, as the Moslem wakens, he hears the cry of the watchman making his round through the narrow streets, "I extol the perfection of the Living King, who sleepeth not nor

dieth," and in the early morning hours he hears the muzzein call :

God is Great,
There is no God but God ;
Mohammed is the apostle of God ;
Come to prayer,
Come to Salvation ;
To pray is better than to sleep.
God is great ;
There is no God but God.

CHAPTER XV

THE COPTIC RELIGION

THE unenlightened traveller, on his first visit to the land of the Nile, is accustomed among his first questions to ask, "What are the Copts?" He is told vaguely that the Copts are Christians, that they claim to be the original Egyptians, as the Egyptian Mohammedan is an Arab or of Arab descent, that they can trace an unadulterated descent from the race to whom the civilization and culture of the ancient world is so largely due, and that they became Christians under the teaching of St. Peter, who placed St. Mark at Alexandria as the founder of the Church which was the foremost Church in Christendom for centuries in energy and learning. Then the inquirer naturally asks, "If Christianity has been in Egypt for nearly two thousand years and failed to materially affect the Mohammedan faith, what is the reason? Why send missionaries from the West to a land that is already sprinkled with Christianity?"

The Coptic Church, from the time of its foundation, rose in power until the year A.D. 457, when the Egyptian Pope was accused of heresy for espousing the cause of an old Abbot whom the Greeks and Romans excommunicated for preaching what is called the Monothysite heresy, or the doctrine of the one nature. He taught that Christ was God and man, that both natures were united in Him, and that therefore it is irreverent to speak of two natures, as that implies imperfect union—that Christ was really God-man. At the end of the controversy which arose over this question the national Church of Egypt was disestablished and all property confiscated.

In A.D. 641 Egypt passed under Moslem rule. In 830 the Egyptians made a stand against the Moslems, but were severely beaten, all males being put to the sword and the women and children carried as slaves to Bagdad. From the ninth century to the nineteenth the history of the Copts has been one of constantly recurring persecution, their churches destroyed, services prohibited, books burned, and elders imprisoned. Their numbers went from twenty millions, until now there are less than one million Copts in Egypt.

To describe the Coptic Church of to-day, I can do

no better than to quote from the explicit account of Lady Amherst of Hackney, who, in her book *A Sketch of Egyptian History*, has so vividly portrayed the forms of this ancient order :

" The Coptic Church has its Patriarch, bishops, arch-priests, deacons, and monks. The Patriarch is chosen from among the Monks of St. Anthony, and must be a celibate. There are twelve bishops and many arch-priests. A priest must be without blemish, and, if married, the husband of one wife. He cannot marry after entering the priesthood, and he must be at least thirty-three years old. He is supported by voluntary contributions or by his own industry. A deacon must not marry after he has become a deacon. Monks usually begin their religious life with hardship and doing menial services; they may not marry, and must spend all their substance in contributing to the general good of the community. After his novitiate the monk is received into the order. The prayers for the dead are said over him, and the world is renounced.

" The Coptic churches are of basilica form, a simple oblong room divided into four sections : the chancel containing the altar, which is concealed by a curtain ; the portion called the ' Heikai ' (or sanctuary), set apart for the priests who read

the lessons, which is generally separated from the next apartment by a screen of lattice work; the division for the male congregation; and, fourthly, the women's portion, which is also completely screened. The screens of the Heikai are often of great antiquity and beauty, sometimes carved or inlaid with ivory, and at others covered with paintings. Shoes are left at the door, and all the congregation make a reverence to the altar after kissing the hem of the curtain which is before it. Nearly every man takes a stick or crutch upon which to rest, as the long service is very fatiguing, and he has to stand nearly all the time. The officiating priests wear handsome vestments, consisting of the alb, the cuffs, the stole, the chasuble open in the front, the girdle, and the amice, which is a long piece of cloth arranged over the head so as to fall behind and before; during the service the people are blessed, and censers with incense are carried and swung among the congregation.

"The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is frequently celebrated. The chalice is kept in an ark, and a fan for keeping flies from it is often made of silver. The bread is in the form of small round cakes, called 'korban,' about three inches in diameter and half an inch thick, and all bear the im-

pression of a small Coptic cross in the centre. This bread is brought to the church and distributed by the priests to the people, before it is consecrated; they may either eat it there, or take it away with them. The consecrated bread is moistened with the wine, which is still occasionally made from raisins crushed in water. At the time of celebration each communicant receives a small piece of the bread while standing outside the altar. The wine is administered in a spoon. The women wait inside their screen, in which there is a little door to which the priest brings the elements and gives them to each applicant in turn. The Real Presence is believed in, both in bread and wine. Before partaking of the Holy Communion, confession is absolutely indispensable, and penances are imposed and absolution given by the arch-priest.

"Baptism is enjoined at the end of forty days for a boy, and eighty for a girl, if healthy; if otherwise, sooner. The child is dipped three times in water in which a little holy oil has been mixed. Immediately after baptism the Holy Communion is given to the infant, the priest dipping his finger in the wine and then touching its lips. Sometimes the child is given milk and honey mixed, as a symbol of admission to the Promised Land.

" There are no organs in the churches, the music consisting of small brass bells and triangles. No images are allowed, but paintings are common. No cross is placed on the altar, which is small, and four lights are used. The kiss of peace forms part of the service.

" The domestic habits of the Copts differ little from those of the Moslems, but their marriage ceremonies are very unlike those of their polygamist compatriots. There are two religious services, the ' Betrothal ' and the ' Coronation.' The first consists of an exchange of rings, which are blessed by the priest in the presence of both parties. This ceremony usually takes place at the home of a relation on a Saturday evening, when the bridegroom also gives his bride a small gold cross. On Sunday the ' Coronation ' takes place in the church ; the bride is attired in a white dress with a white veil, and the priest throws over them a large veil of white silk or linen, symbolical of purity. Prayers are then offered and both are annointed with holy oil. The priest places a crown on each of their heads with the words ' With glory and honour the Father has crowned them ; the Son blesses them ; the Holy Ghost crowns them, comes down upon them, and perfects them.' After this

they stand with crossed arms at the door of the sanctuary, and the priest lays the golden cross upon them and pronounces the absolution. The crowns belong to the church and are taken off before leaving it, and the Holy Communion is sometimes, but not always, administered at the close of the service.

"When any one is very sick, he is brought to the church, and anointed with holy oil, and prayers for his recovery are said. If he is too ill to come, a proxy is found, and the same form is observed. The funeral services are held in the churches, but the customs of wailing and fasting as soon as death takes place resemble those of the Moslems. After the service the procession forms; headed by the sexton carrying a large cross of silver, and, followed by the choir boys and priests, the bier and mourners proceed to the cemetery."

In visiting Egyptian schools or churches the visitor will find it difficult to distinguish between the Copts and the Moslems, as their general appearance is the same. Their dress is usually a black or blue cotton gown over their shirts, with a turban of black or blue, which they were compelled to wear in order to distinguish them from the Mussulman with his white turban. Now it is hard to distin-

guish them even by their turbans, as both Mohammedans and Copts have adopted the tarboosh or Turkish fez. The Coptic woman veils her face and keeps herself secluded the same as her Mohammedan sister, although the restrictions are not so severe for her as are enjoined upon the followers of Mohammed. The Moslem pilgrimage to Mecca has a counterpart in the Coptic pilgrimage to Jerusalem, a caravan starting for the Holy City in time for Passion week or Easter.

The Copts pride themselves on having kept alive old traditions of education and culture, and that they have preserved the Christian conception of family life. In learning and in the intellectual alertness with which he has adapted himself to Western education and to Western business, the Copt has proved to be quite equal if not superior to the Moslem. The literacy of the Egyptian Mohammedan is 78 per 1,000 males and 2 per 1,000 females, while that of the Copt is 188 per 1,000 males and 16 per 1,000 females. In visiting the girls' schools the teachers repeatedly told me that the Coptic girls stood at the head of their classes.

If the Moslems have influenced the Copts religiously, the Copts have certainly influenced them from a commercial standpoint. In Upper Egypt

nearly all the large business is in the hands of the Copts, and they have made themselves indispensable to their Moslem neighbours. The rich live in palatial homes, furnished with every modern convenience. The women and girls take part in the modern life very much as do the Western women, they are skilful on the piano, read Browning and Tennyson, and are often capable of fluent conversation in both English and French.

While visiting in a Coptic home in Assiut, the father, with true fatherly pride, brought me some poems that his daughter had composed in English. They were full of a weird beauty, a mingling of the West and the East, that seemed incredible to have come from the pen of a little Coptic maid knowing only the narrow life of an Egyptian home.

As one goes through Egypt and becomes acquainted with the Egyptian press and the Egyptian sentiment, one will scarcely find stronger feelings expressed than those concerning the differences of opinion between Moslem and Copt, although the leaders will tell you that there is a tendency to unify and join forces upon common issues. The Copts feel that the English Government shows partiality in its dealings with the Mohammedans, who are given Government positions where the

Copt is barred, that they are left unrepresented upon the Provincial councils, that no Government grants are bestowed upon Coptic institutions, and what touches the mothers, and a subject upon which they can wax most eloquent, that the Koran is taught in the Government primary schools to the exclusion of the sacred book of the Copts. They say that they pay 16 per cent. of the educational tax, and should have a right to demand that their children receive a certain religious instruction, in accordance with that tax. The women have another grievance, that Friday, the Sabbath of the Moslem, is observed to the exclusion of Sunday, the Coptic holy day, and that their husbands and sons must work on their day of rest if employed in Government work or if in school.

I was not especially interested in the political quarrels between the Copts and Moslems, but if religion is to be taught in the public schools at all, it seemed to me that there should be some adequate and definite arrangement, by which the Coptic girls and boys, of the country districts especially, would find an opportunity of instruction in their own faith by the Coptic priests, rather than being subjected entirely to the influence of the Koranic schools.

The charge is brought against the Copts that they have not executive ability, that they cannot govern nor obtain obedience when put in positions of power, and that in many ways they are not so trustworthy as the Mohammedans. If these charges are true, and there are many differing opinions on the subject, they are faults which in a great measure are the result of a continual struggle for self-preservation. That there is, and that there has been through many generations, real virility in the Coptic people is proved by the fact that they have triumphed over a multitude of difficulties, enduring centuries of oppression and changing rule, never wavering from the faith which they hold to-day, and which is made tangible in nearly five hundred churches and nine hundred priests.

When you pass through Egypt and see the little blue cross tattooed upon the arm or the face of a child or woman, you may know that they are members of the same faith as yourself, although many of its forms and customs have been changed to meet the conditions surrounding it, and to which it has had to bend, although it has never been entirely broken.

CHAPTER XVI

EGYPT AND THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

THERE is little doubt that from the point of view of the evangelization of the Mohammedans in Egypt, missionary zeal has met with small success when compared with results in other lands. There have been many difficulties to overcome and not enough workers to cover the field.

It was found that there was in all Egypt but one Evangelical Christian Church member to every 58 Orthodox Copts, and to every 895 Mohammedans. Of the 10,269,449 Mohammedans, it is not thought that the existing agencies of all Christian missions in Egypt are reaching more than 1,000,000 ; and of 3,621 towns and villages, not more than 360 have any regular missionary work carried on in them. The American Mission has been in Egypt for sixty years and can show but 12,044 members of the Church, less than 200 of them converts from the Moslem faith.

The task of Christian missions in Egypt and the Soudan is a gigantic one. Here is an Oriental religion which enrols in its membership throughout the world no less than 223,000,000 people, and which is making a determined stand in certain parts of the Soudan to hold and increase its native constituency. It is a land where a Moslem accepts another faith with much hazard to his career and often to his life. "We have been obliged to repeatedly move our converts from place to place to ensure their physical safety," said a missionary in Northern Egypt.

Furthermore the rapid Westernization of Egypt has increased in certain respects rather than diminished the task of missions. The Egyptian youth, both boys and girls, who have come into contact with Government and mission schools have shown a tendency to discredit their Islamic teaching. Students have discovered that modern science and the medieval seventh-century teaching of the Koran are incompatible. They have been confronted with an inevitable choice between the Koran and the present-day points of view, and the teaching of the former has been compelled to yield place to the new knowledge found within their text-books.

This would seem to be an ally of the missionary worker, but, like students in many other parts of the Eastern world, this losing faith in their own gods has only brought about agnosticism or indifference to any religion. The young Egyptians, like the young Japanese, are saying, " We can take your Western civilization in so far as it helps us to understand the needs of the modern life, but we take it without allegiance to your Western religion, the acceptance of which would set us at variance with the majority sentiment of our country." And they often add, " And so far as we can see by studying the examples of Western Christianity which we meet in the social and business life of our cities, your religion would add but little to our satisfaction."

A further barrier to Christian sentiment is found in the fact that the ruling policy of the occupying Power in Egypt is neutral as regards religion, or, when it is partisan, is inclined to favour Mohammedanism rather than Christianity, in a land where 94 per cent. of the population adhere to the Moslem tenets.

Another obstacle to Moslem conversion to Christianity lies in the fact that most of the gains of the Christian missions in Egypt have been from the ranks of the Coptic Church, who are religiously

the hereditary foes of the Mohammedans, and whose adherence to any particular thought or action would be a reason for the Moslem to discredit the same.

Although the Christian missions can show few converts to their faith from among the followers of the Prophet Mohammed, their influence has been great, and too much cannot be said for the excellent work they have been doing through their schools, hospitals, and work among the secluded women, for the making of higher standards of living, both socially and individually.

In the evangelization of a foreign land the methods are adapted to the needs of that land. Missionary work in Egypt is not the same as in other countries. Street preaching is not found in Egypt as it is in India, because it is forbidden by law. Also in India there are few chances for close relationship between the missionary and the native, because of the caste prejudices, while in Egypt there are no such restrictions, the missionary and his Egyptian friend having the same chances of companionship as they would have if brothers of the same race. Because of the peculiar conditions of Egypt, where so great a degree of the population is found in towns and good-sized villages, the mis-

sionary is engaged not so much in dealing with the individual as with the tendency to become an administrator, supervising the institutions which have been established through missionary zeal in all parts of the country of the Nile.

The chief agents in missionary work in Egypt are the missionary, the colporteur, the evangelist, the school teacher, the harem worker, and the native pastor.

The literary and colporteur work is the beginning of all missionary effort. The first task of the missionary is to give to the people among whom he labours the text-book of his religion. In Egypt this part of the work of missions has been easier than in many other lands, because the Copts believe in the Bible as the Word of God, though they may know little of its real teachings. The Moslems are, in a way, committed to the Bible, because the Koran endorses both the Prophet and the Gospels. The Oriental is a firm believer in Divine revelation and inspired words, and any book claiming to be the Word of God has his reverence. The religion of the Bible has an advantage over the religion of the Koran, in that it has been translated into all dialects and languages, while the Koran, written in Arabic and not allowed translation by order of the Prophet, is intelligible

to only 45,000,000 of the 223,000,000 who profess faith in its teachings.

Bible and tracts are taken to hundreds of towns and villages, and to hundreds of thousands of lives that have never seen a foreign missionary. The Bible is carried across the desert in the camel trains that bring the produce of the cities to the dwellers beneath the tents, and it is taken in the Nile boats far up that river and its tributaries to the black man in the Soudan, where it awakens interest and discussion among the villagers, even if its message is never understood or followed.

The educational method has been the dominant note in missionary work in Egypt. It has advantages over all other forms of missionary labour, as it has the opportunity of influencing life at the most impressionable age. For weeks at a time and for five or six days a week, and for several hours each day, the young Egyptian is brought under the influence of a Christian atmosphere, and each day receives some definite instruction in the tenets of the Christian faith. Where the school is a boarding school, the influence upon life is much greater. Here the boy or girl is completely freed from the often debasing influence of the home life, and the seed planted by the missionary is given opportunity to

grow and take root, often resulting in the development of a fine character, if not in actual allegiance to the religion from the West.

The educational methods also disarm prejudice. There is a great thirst and desire abroad in all the East for education. The men are becoming educated and demand educated wives, the economic pressure demands that men shall have Western learning if they hope to succeed in the life of to-day, and parents, both Coptic and Moslem, are willing and anxious to have their children receive the excellent education for which the mission schools in Egypt are noted. The opinion of the better class Egyptian with reference to the mission schools is voiced in the speech of the Governor of the Province of Assiut in regard to the college maintained by the American Mission in the city of Assiut:

"I am able to say that both the city of Assiut and the whole Province have derived a very great deal of help from the presence of this institution. Through its influence thousands of our young men have been trained into chaste and noble characters. Many of them have entered the school from most humble homes, often indeed from homes of poverty, and they are now living in comfortable and honourable stations of life. Some are occupying positions

of trust in the Government both in Egypt and the Soudan, others have entered business life and agriculture, and others have become educators and ministers of the Gospel. And I have become thoroughly convinced of the excellent life and fidelity of every one of them with whom I have become personally acquainted. In closing, I desire to repeat that this institution has been and is indeed a great blessing to the whole Province of which I have the honour to be the Governor."

The Egyptians take all that is offered them in the line of education with most grateful hearts, because of their extreme necessity. Egypt is one of the most illiterate lands, and, now they find they are handicapped in competition with other nations, because of their ignorance, and they have been wise enough to notice, that along with the missionary came the school-book, so the teacher has been received with open doors where the evangelist has been looked upon coldly if not persecuted. They have seen that among their people in general only about 85 out of 1,000 men and 3 from 1,000 women could read and write, while from the Protestant communities of 22,500 people, there were 521 out of every 1,000 men and 200 out of every 1,000 women who could read.

That the Egyptians have taken advantage of the educational facilities brought them from foreign lands is shown by the fact that the American Mission report of 1912 records 5,517 girls and 11,434 boys in their schools, which is only a few thousands less than those enrolled in the Government schools. The College of Assiut has had under its influence during its establishment 4,000 different individuals. Over 200 have taken the full course and graduated, going out into the world as ministers, business men, and teachers.

Each year finds the girls' schools more firmly established, and the teachings of the missionary carried into homes impossible even for the harem worker to penetrate. Many Mohammedan mothers send their girls to the Christian school, believing as a firm follower of the teaching of the Prophet said to me, "I send my daughter to the Mission school, as I wish her to have the Western knowledge that is necessary for an Egyptian girl to have at the present time, if she wishes to make a suitable marriage. I do not fear their religious teaching as my daughter has been well taught in the *true* religion at home, and nothing they can say will influence her." Yet the Christian atmosphere surrounding this girl throughout her days passed

GRADUATING CLASS, CAIRO.

in the school, is bound to have an influence upon her life, if it does not altogether shake her belief in the teaching of Mohammed, whose attitude towards woman is so different from the attitude taken by the Christ.

I visited with a missionary worker the home of one of her pupils, who had married. She welcomed us eagerly, and took us up to her bed-sitting-room, as the only other room in the house, the kitchen, was almost entirely occupied by an enormous bowl filled with bread in the process of being kneaded. She brought from out a box a small Bible, and seemed delighted to join with the missionary in a short study of one of its chapters, although she was not an acknowledged Christian. Her husband, a professional chanter of the Koran, came in and sat down, listening respectfully to the words of the Bible, as it was read verse by verse, first by his wife, then by the missionary, and when the latter asked if she might pray, he sat with lowered eyes and waited until the final Amen; then he said good-bye, as he was going to a wedding where he was to sing, in company with five others, the words of his Prophet. As I watched his kindliness and tolerance of a religion in which he did not believe, I wondered if we of the Western world

would listen as respectfully to the teaching of the Arabian Prophet, if it were brought to our homes by zealous missionaries of that faith.

The medical work is carried on by visiting the villages, by clinics, and by hospitals. The last is the most important, yet is so closely allied to the others, that they seem to be one. There are four missionary hospitals in Egypt in the American Mission, two for women and two for men. Through the medical work access is readily gained to the lives of the people, because where there is pain and misery, there is no distinction in the God that brings relief. The Egyptians may not believe in the words read to them from the Bible, as they sit in the waiting-rooms of the hospital, but they do believe in the healing power of the medicines brought by religious zeal, from over the seas, and that they take advantage of the help brought to them is shown in the fact that in 1912 the total number of patients in hospitals and clinics was 62,709.

One of the most important workers along evangelistic lines, and practically the only one who comes in contact with the women of Egypt, is the harem worker. Because of the seclusion of Moslem women and their inaccessibility to men, the need for harem work is most strong, if the mothers are to be reached.

Among Moslems it is almost impossible for a woman to make a confession of belief in the Christian faith, and it was not many years ago that the elders of some of the Protestant congregations debated seriously whether women could be admitted to Church membership without degrading the Church and lowering its standards. To-day there are over 3,950 women in the membership of the Protestant Church in Egypt. There are thirty-five women in one mission alone who spend their time in visiting in the homes, where they not only read to the women, but also give them regular lessons so that they may read to themselves and help pass the many hours that are bound to bring weariness and ennui to the woman kept closely confined within the house. In last year's report there were 5,372 women receiving instruction in their homes.

All missionary work claims to be evangelistic. That is the reason of its being, to proclaim the Gospel, and it is done in Egypt by the foreign or native evangelist, the native pastor, and the harem worker. In the larger towns are churches with their regular congregations and their pastors, and church officials, very much as we see them at home, but in the smaller villages and towns the Message

is brought the people by the ardent disciples who wish to give to others what they believe has brought them peace and help in time of trouble. Some of these converted Egyptians are most zealous in going from village to village, reading to any group that will listen to them, and giving tracts and extracts from the Bible to inquirers.

There are several missionary societies working in Egypt, foremost among them being the Church Missionary Society of Great Britain, the United Presbyterian Mission of America, and several minor missions, all doing noble work. It is objected at times that the majority of the conversions are from the membership of the Coptic Church, and there are those who challenge the right of the missionary to work among the adherents of this faith, saying that they are already Christians. The missionary answers that this Church has degenerated until it is now only living in its past, that it has left its pure worship, and has allowed its spirit to be completely engulfed in ritual and dead forms that mean less than nothing to those who have been born within its fold. It has lost its power to make converts from its more virile neighbours, and cannot even be said to be holding its own, and, unless something comes to revitalize it, will ultimately

become either totally extinct, or else simply a part of the Mohammedan life around it.

Whether or not one believes in the eventual Christianization of the world, one is convinced that the Christian missionary has been the pioneer who has opened new pathways in the field of education, and caused the youth of Egypt to demand a higher learning throughout the land. This aggressive religion from the West is bound to raise the religious plane of whatever country it touches, by forcing other faiths to resume higher and higher forms in order to survive.

CHAPTER XVII

THE EGYPTIAN QUESTION AND THE EGYPTIAN WOMAN

THE question of Egypt is to-day, "What of the Egyptian woman?" In her character and in her environment lie the great secret of Egypt's future. It is a period when women are coming to their own in recognized influence and leadership in the Western world, when the women of England with their rights and their wrongs form one of the dominating subjects of universal discussion, when womanhood in America has for the first time in history been elevated to the platform of political parties. It is a time indeed when a considerable part of the social and religious movement of every civilized land owes its initial impulse and much of its propaganda to women who have been set free economically as well as intellectually by their self-reliant work and independent thinking. In this period of the renaissance of the world's

womankind, what is to be the fate of the woman of Egypt? She has had a past in the land of the Pharaohs. Will she have a future? If so, upon what conditions?

But an historian will say that this rebirth of woman's force and woman's faculties is occurring solely in the West; the Eastern woman cannot rise even if she would. She is bound too closely in the skein of century-old observance.

While this argument might be injured through a study of the women in the Far East who are beginning to match the new constitutional advances by their own emancipation in both educational and domestic life, an instance nearer to the Egyptian woman's own home may be cited. The women of Persia, in both custom and religion the Egyptian women's sisters, have recently revealed the inherent essence and the ever-ready possibilities of the Mohammedan woman toward patriotism and genuine idealism. I quote from Mr. Morgan Shuster's graphic account of the rise of the Persian woman in defence of her country.

During the dark days in which Russian antagonism was taking every conceivable form to annihilate the Persian Assembly, when the bazaars and the streets were torn by conflicting rumours and anxious fears,

at a moment when it seemed that the liberties of the people must be thrown away by the Persian men because of the terrific force brought to bear upon them, the long-slumbering wills of the women of Persia were kindled into passionate activity. The following are Mr. Shuster's words:

"Comes forward now the Persian woman! Out from their walled courtyards and harems march three hundred of that weak sex, with the flush of undying determination in their cheeks. They were clad in their plain black robes, with the white net of their veils dropping over their faces. Many held pistols under their skirts or in the folds of their sleeves. Straight to the Assembly they went, and, gathered there, demanded of the President that he admit them all. What the grave deputies of the Land of the Lion and the Sun may have thought of this strange visitation, history saith not. The President consented to receive a delegation of them. In his reception-hall they confronted him, and lest he and his colleagues should doubt their meaning, these cloistered Persian mothers, wives, and daughters showed their revolvers threateningly, tore aside their veils, and confessed their decision to kill their own husbands and sons, and add their own dead bodies to the sacrifice, if the deputies should waver

in their duties to uphold the liberty and dignity of the Persian people and nation.

"A week or two later the Assembly was destroyed by a *coup d'état* executed by Russian hirelings, but its members were stainless of having sold their country's birthright.

"All honour to the veiled women of Persia! With the constraining conditions of the past about them, with the idea of absolute dependence upon the fancy and caprice of men ever before them, deprived of all opportunity to educate themselves after modern ideals, watched, guarded, and rebuffed, they offered up their daily contribution to their country's cause, watching its servants each moment with a mother's jealous eyes, and failed not, even in the grim, tragic hour when men's hearts grew weak and the palsying dread of the prison and its tortures, the noose and the bullet, had settled heavy on the bravest of the land.

"The dearest hopes of the Persian people have been cruelly smothered, but the memory of their heroic women will live to inspire mankind wherever the love of justice dwells in the hearts of men."

Yet however essentially true and great may be the woman of the East, she must needs look to the man of the East in her struggle for rehabilitation.

Whether she knows it or not, the first question of the Egyptian woman as regards her future is the question of the Egyptian man. He is the master of her fate, almost the captain of her soul in this Oriental world. Womanhood must first shine by reflected light, the light which is cast upon her from the advancing progress of Egyptian husbands, Egyptian brothers, and Egyptian sons. Her past must be especially illumined by the light that is revealed in the advance of the new generation. The boys and girls studying together in modern schools for the sake of handwork and mental training are doing much to change the atmosphere of the home from medievalism to modernity, but the heads of the household are in the last analysis the deciding factors.

These men of Egypt have already made long strides toward a formidable impact and competition with the men of other nations. They have entered with formidable force the markets of the world. They have laid an agricultural and industrial foundation during the past thirty years of the British Occupancy which has brought a decadent race numbering but a few millions to a progressing, prosperous people of 12,000,000, incorporating amongst themselves the signs of modern progress as revealed

in education, legislative justice, economic welfare, and betterment, together with that which is even more phenomenal here, a tendency to desire, at least, an adaptation of their Moslem faith to the exigencies of the modern day.

The men of Egypt have broken across the barriers of a constricted land, and, although as yet they have travelled without their wives, they nevertheless have become familiar, through frequent visits to Europe and America, with Western thought and Western ideals, all of which are making for advancement and change. They are learning that to be on an equality with Western nations they must observe the rules both of trade and also of social decorum. The travellers and students and business men who are now coming to Egypt in ever-increasing numbers are bringing to the heretofore secluded self-satisfied Egyptian inhabitants the breath of outside civilization.

The man of Egypt who twenty-five years ago wore a robe and turban has exchanged them for the more modern tarboosh and for what Mr. Edward Dicey would call "divine pantaloons!" The man who sent his boy to El Azhar now sends him to an up-to-date Government school not unlike institutions that may be found in Prussia, France,

or New England. The man who was content to ride nonchalantly through the streets of Cairo or Alexandria upon a donkey, now whirls down the boulevards in his automobile. Even the Fellaheen and the Bedouin in the remoter rural districts are not unfamiliar with the telephone which connects the homes and offices of their officials with European commercial centres, while the Arab newspapers that even a decade ago only dealt with local news and Koranic matters are beginning to meet the demands of the readers for national and international information. When a foreigner appears it is to be expected that the native Egyptian will ask him about the cost of travel, the price of trade products in his country, while one is often astonished at the actual knowledge revealed by Egyptian men concerning military and political proceedings throughout Europe and the Western world.

Even more important than all perhaps, not simply to Egyptian men, but to the women as well, is the economic emancipation of Egypt. For the first time in centuries, if not in the sweep of history, the Egyptian has a just and safe pride of commercial and industrial wealth-getting. Without fear he can now talk piastres, he can invest his money in savings-banks or in the unusually productive land

which is being reclaimed by modern systems of irrigation, and he is bound to share with his household this material prosperity. With all this reversal of attitude, whether revealed in Western furniture in the home or a more lenient attitude to the lady therein, the man of Egypt is hastening the day of the enfranchisement of the Egyptian woman and every step onward toward Europeanization means definite progress in the liberties and the life of the women of Egypt.

Scarcely second in importance to the state of mind of the Egyptian man is the rising up of the woman of Egypt to accept her new advantages—to enter into her new day. She is not yet ready for it all. She must become capable of her new empire lest she may injure more than she inspires. She must have both assistance and time, with which to prepare for high Egyptian womanhood; it is a long step from her present state even to the dignity and lofty equality possessed by the ancient Egyptian women.

Her baneful past has brought to her habits of idleness and desultoriness, especially in the higher caste woman, which must be converted into habits of disciplined occupation. Her cleverness has been aimed at deceit and intrigue, her chief weapons for

self-defence and the accomplishment of her desire. This wit must be trained to serve higher uses. Her ambitions and passions must be harnessed to loftier ideals than those of the slave wife of the days of Arabi and Saladin. The arousal of a new self-respect must be brought about together with the awakening consciousness, already in evidence, that being simply a wife does not exhaust the reaches of feminine career, but that a woman can also be capable of transforming a tawdry house into a home of culture and refinement.

The union of her powers with those of her husband in philanthropy and religion; the enlarging sphere of the intelligent upbringing of children; the education and use of money beyond its vulgar expression in bedecking the body with heavy and rude jewellery; in short, the transformation of the present shut-in, more or less dependent, fearful, and sometimes sensual woman, into a veritable help-meet, wife, and mother, as those terms hold the content of all that is helpful, devoted and holy in Western imagination,—this must occur in order that the woman of the Nile may be free and ready to enter into her new destiny. This is also the problem, the inevitable necessity, the Egyptian Question; it confronts the woman and the man alike in present-day Egypt.

AN EVENING VIEW OF THE PYRAMIDS.

But is this all? Is woman's occupation for the sake of service to others in home and State the whole story of her redemption, the whole secret of her reformed existence in Egypt? No! Neither is it half the story for *her*; it is not half of all that life may hold for this woman primeval. These are but the wages she will gladly pay for love and the right to choose her mate. Down below custom, tradition, Orientalism, even below Islam itself, is the heart of a woman, and there is but one word that is sovereign and final in that realm.

Silent and alone in the shadow of the limestone hills at Denderah, well back from the Nile, the Egyptian traveller, after a long dusty donkey ride from the Nile boats, finds before him a comparatively young Egyptian temple—it is only two thousand years old—the Temple of the Goddess Hathor, the Egyptian Aphrodite. It is a relic of the Ptolomies broken and ruined; defaced by Christian Copts, it stands dark, tragic, superb—a beautiful sad temple of the Desert, sad in the air of spent pleasures, in the air of a day that is dead. Cleopatra is graven in stone on the back of the temple, with Caesarion, her son, at her side. A Sheikh's tomb adds to the solemn impression. All about are the pale sands of the desert and the barren hills.

But amid the pathos of these emblems there is pointed out to the traveller a staircase—"the staircase of the New Year" as it is called; priests in stone are pointing up to the light above it—the rays of Ra, all are pointing up, up to where the Egyptian sun is blazing light about the figure of the white goddess.

Is it a kind of prophetic "vision splendid" of the New Egypt, of the Woman of Egypt? And is she just beginning to climb those stairs of the New Year, slowly upward, but certainly upward, as the new day lures her on, into the Light that leads even clearer than that which blazed about the heathen goddess?

INDEX

Almsgiving, 329
Amusements in Cairo, 241
Animals for food, the law of killing, 331
Assiut, 202, 222, 345, 354, 356

Bazaars in Cairo, 51–55
— woman customers in, 29
Bedouin, the, 150
— chief, a, 253
— children, 263
— guest-house, a, 255
— harem, a, 254
— home, a, 259
— tent, in a, 247
— the liberty of the, 157
— tribal customs, 248
Bedouins, among the, 242–284
— the hospitality of, 242–284
Betrothal customs, 205–209
Birthday feasts, 289

Cairo, cosmopolitan, 31 ; street merchants, 34 ; scarabs, 34, 37 ; fly switches, 38 ; donkeys and donkey boys, 39, 40 ; types of people in, 43 ; vegetable sellers of, 48 ; street kitchens of, 48 ; scribes of, 51 ; bazaars in, 51–55 ; the charms of, 55 ; mosques of, 56–59 ; cafés and restaurants, 59–68 ; keeping house in, 98–125 ; house-hunting in, 98 ; the market-place, 105 ; marketing in, 105–118 ; the sewing lady, 121 ; housekeeping experiences in, 122 ; amusements in, 241
Camel, the, 267
— legend of the, 94
— riding a, 270
Characteristics and customs, 126
Charity, 329
Charms of Cairo, the, 55
"Charms" of the Egyptian woman, 305
"Charms" and superstition, 299–314
Chiefs, Bedouin, 256
Child marriages, 202
Children, Bedouin, 263
— effect of divorce upon the, 220
— Egyptian, 285
— Koranic laws regarding the treatment of, 290
— of the lower class, 293
Christian missions, 348
Cities along the Nile, 88
Cleanliness, rules for, 334
Coptic Church, the, 338
— institutions and the Government, 346
— marriage celebrations, 342
— priest, the, 339
— religion, the, 337–347

Copts, the, 337
— and Moslems, the difference between, 343
Cosmopolitan Cairo, 31
Courtyard shopping, 236
Cupid's tragedy, 211
Customs, betrothal, 205–209

Desert homes, 274
— the woman of the, 150
Dinner party, a, 232
Divorce, Egypt's triple, 215
— the effect of, upon the children, 220
— the high percentage of, 214
Divorced wife's possessions, 217
Donkeys and donkey boys, 39, 40
Dreams, 313
Dress, 134, 137, 145
— jewellery and gossip, 229

Education, 27, 161–179, 355
— facilities, missionary, 359
— and liberty, 174
— the progress of, 170
— of a sheikh, the, 81
— religious, 168
Edwards, Miss Amelia B., 268
Effect of divorce upon the children, the, 220
Egypt of the temples, 96
Egyptian children, 285
— furniture, 130, 134
— harem, the, 180–199
— lady, the, 129
— mother, the, 290
— woman, the "charms" of the, 305
— — and the Egyptian question, 364–376
— — the progress of, 28
— women, characteristics and customs, of, 126
Egyptian women of the middle class, 133
— — the predominate desire of, 200
— — types of, 126
Egyptians, the original, 337
Egypt's triple divorce, 215
El Azhar, 81, 369
Emancipation of women, the, 360
Entertainment, a women's, 232
Evil eye, the, 306
— spirits, 299

Fairies or "ginns," 299
Fasting, 329
Fear of being seen by men, the, 194
Feasts, birthday, 289
Fellaha, the, 145
Fly switches, 38
Followers of Mohammed, the, 322
Furniture, Egyptian, 130, 134

"Ginns," fairies or, 299
Girls, difficulties of educating, 166
Gods of the Nile, 310
Gossip, dress and jewellery, 229
Government and Coptic institutions, the, 346
Guest-house, a Bedouin, 255

Harem, a Bedouin, 254
— control of the, 197
— the Egyptian, 180
— influence of Koran in the, 187
— life in the, 188
— the seclusion of the, 180, 183
— woman the preserver of, 198
Hatshepsut, Queen, 27
Head covering, 154
Heaven, Moslem's, 326
Holy Communion, Coptic, 341

Home, a Bedouin, 259
Homes, desert, 274
Hospitality of the Bedouins, 242–284
House-hunting in Cairo, 98
Housekeeping experiences in Cairo, 122
Houses, village, 145.

Incubator, a village, 85
Infant mortality, 294
Influence of Western civilization, the, 129
Interpretation of the Koran, the, 331
Islam, El, 315
— a man's religion, 325

Jewellery, 137, 138, 141, 142, 150
— dress and gossip, 229

Khadijah, 316
Koran, the, 320
— in the harem, influence of, 187
— the interpretation of the, 331
— prohibitory laws of the, 330
Koranic laws regarding treatment of children, 290
— laws for women, 323
Kutb, 303

Legend of the camel, 94
Liberty of the Bedouin, the, 157
— and education, 174
Life in the harem, 188
— along the Nile, 73–97

Market-place Cairo, the, 105
Marriage celebrations, Coptic, 342
— preparations for, 201
Marriages, child, 202
Mecca, 315, 316, 319, 328, 333, 344
Medical work, missionary, 360
Meeting-places of women, the, 235
Men, the fear of being seen by, 194
Missionary advance, 351
— difficulties, 349
— educational facilities, 359
— medical work, 360
— methods, 352
— worker, a, 359
Mohammed, the followers of, 322
— the persecution of, 319
— the Prophet, 315
Mohammedan prayers, 319
— religion, the, 315
— religious laws, 327
Moslems, the differences between Copts and, 343
Moslem's heaven, 326
Mosques of Cairo, 56–59
Mother, the Egyptian, 290

New freedom, the, 364
— generation, the, 368
Nile, cities along the, 88
— gods of the, 310
— life along the, 73–97
— villages along the, 74, 77, 78, 85, 88, 89, 90–94, 142

People in Cairo, types of, 43
Persecution of Mohammed, the, 319
Pigeon house, a, 85
Polygamy, 220
Position of woman, the, 322
Prayers, Mohammedan, 319
— for sons, 286
Predominate desire of Egyptian women, the, 200
Priest, the Coptic, 339
Progress of education, the, 170

Prohibitory laws of the Koran, 330
Pyramids, the, 68–72

Religion, the Coptic, 337–347
— the Mohammedan, 315
Religious education, 168
— laws, Mohammedan, 327
Restaurants and cafés in Cairo, 59–68

Sakkia and Shadoof, the, 90–93
Scarabs, 34, 37
Schools, 165
— old, 78, 81
Scribes in Cairo, 51
Seclusion of the harem, 180, 183
Shadoof and Sakkia, the, 90–93
Sheikh, the education of a, 81
Shopping, courtyard, 236
Sons, prayers for, 286
Sphinx, the, 71–72
Street kitchens in Cairo, 48
— merchants, 34
Superstition and "charms," 299–314

Tattooing, 154
Temples, Egypt of the, 96
Tribal customs, 248
Trumbull, H. C., 242
Turban, the respect of the, 44
Types of Egyptian women, 126

Vegetable sellers in Cairo, 48
Village houses, 145
— incubator, a, 85
Villages along the Nile, 74, 77, 78, 85, 88, 89, 90–94, 142
Visiting, women, 188, 226

"Wellees," 302
Western civilization, the influence of, 129
Wife, the duties of a, 224
Woman of the desert, the, 150
— Koranic laws for, 323
— the position of, 322
— the preserver of the harem, 198
Woman's past, 24
Women customers in bazaars, 29
— the emancipation of, 360
— the meeting-places of, 235
— of the lower class, 137
— of the middle class, 133
— visiting, 188, 226
Women's entertainment, a, 232

Printed by Hazell, Watson & Viney, Ld., London and Aylesbury, England.

DATE DUE

JAN 31 1994			

HIGHSMITH # 45220

DT70 .C77
The women of Egypt.
Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library
1 1012 00050 7451